

FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

Issued Weekly—Subscription price, \$3.50 per year; Canada, \$4.00; Foreign, \$4.50. Harry E. Wolff, Publisher, 160 West 23d Street, New York, N. Y. Entered as Second-Class Matter, October 4, 1911, at the Post-Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879.

No. 797

NEW YORK, JANUARY 7, 1921.

Price 7 Cents

A SHARP BOY

Or, MAKING HIS MARK IN BUSINESS

BY A SELF-MADE MAN

CHAPTER I.—On the Tramp.

"This is a fierce day for a chap to be out in," muttered Joe Graham, as the wind, coming across the bare-looking fields in heavy gusts, nearly swept him off his feet.

He was plodding along the country road with a well-worn grip, containing all his worldly possessions, in one hand and a stick in the other. It was a bleak March afternoon, and the sun, which was invisible behind the clouds that overspread the sky, was low down near the horizon, consequently the landscape looked dark and dreary and was growing darker all the time. The prospect of a steady, cold and lasting rain was good, and Joe much doubted his chances of reaching his destination before it came on. If it did, he would have to seek shelter at some house that side of the city of Chester, where he proposed to stop for the night.

Joe was an orphan who some years since had been left to the care of a miserly, crabbed old uncle, who kept a general store in a Pennsylvania village. It was a pretty hard mill that the boy had to go through during his sojourn with his uncle, Silas Green. He stood it as long as he could, hoping that Mr. Green would learn to appreciate the value of his services as a clerk and general assistant at the store, but his uncle seemed to grow more dissatisfied with the boy's efforts to do his duty, and so their relations finally reached the breaking point.

After a particularly hot quarrel one morning, Joe threw up the sponge. He went to his room, packed his grip, and quit the house without taking the trouble to bid his uncle good-by, determining to make his own way in the world hereafter. He set his face toward Philadelphia, with a brave heart and dogged resolution, for he believed that a big city offered the most likely field for his energy and whatever talents he possessed. Having scarcely any money, he could not afford to ride on the railroad, so he had to hoof it along the roads that ran in the direction of the mecca of his hopes, taking his chances of securing food and shelter along his route. So far things had gone fairly well with him. He had been three days and two nights on the tramp, and had not suffered for either food or lodging, earning both in most cases by rendering such small services as he was asked to perform.

Now he was approaching Chester, where he intended to put up for the night. Although less than a mile distant, it was fated that he should not reach the small city that night, nor for sev-

eral days to come. A turn in the road brought him in sight of an ancient-looking building of many gables, which stood a hundred feet back from the road, and it also gave him a distant view of Chester. It was leased by the present tenant—a tall, dark-featured man of perhaps five-and-forty years. He was known as Etiocles the Egyptian, an astrologer and fortune-teller.

As Joe drew near the iron gate in the stone wall that surrounded the house and grounds of the astrologer the rain began to come down at a rate that promised a steady downpour in a few minutes.

"Gee! I'm in for it," he breathed, "and the only house close by is cut off by a stone wall and a gate that is doubtless locked against intruders. This is hard luck. I shall be soaked in a few minutes, which is a pleasant prospect. The chill wind was bad enough, but with the rain on top of it it's simply—hello!"

The exclamation was drawn from him by the opening of the big iron gate which he had just reached. And it opened, too, without any visible assistance. At the same time a voice, seemingly out of the air, said, in deep, sepulchral tones:

"Walk in and take shelter."

"Holy smoke!" ejaculated Joe, staring through the gateway. "Who spoke?"

Apparently there was not a soul around. Joe, however, was not of a superstitious nature, and though he was puzzled to account for the voice, as well as for the opening of the gate of its own accord, he did not think of ascribing it to any unnatural cause. He was only too glad to avail himself of the invitation, and so he stepped through the gate and looked around for the house and the person who had asked him in. He saw neither—nothing but the wall running off in either direction from the gate. As he stood stock-still in his surprise the door swung noiselessly to behind him and a slight click announced that it was fast.

Some boys would have been so overcome with consternation that in spite of the certainty of a drenching they would have tried to open the gate and make their escape from what appeared to be an uncanny place. Not so Joe. His chief consideration at that moment was to escape the rain, and seeing a wide porch in front of the front door of the old house, he immediately made a break for it. Hardly had he stepped onto the porch when the door opened and the same voice said: "Enter." Had it been another voice, Joe would have thought nothing of it, but that the mysterious voice at the gate could have preceded him

and got inside the house in so brief a time fairly got his goat.

"Enter, young man," said the voice again. "Be not afraid. I have been expecting you."

"Oh, I say, show yourself, whoever you are!" said Joe.

Immediately a tall, dark-featured man stepped into sight.

"Come in," he said. "You are welcome to my hospitality."

Joe wasn't sure at that moment that he yearned for this proffered hospitality. Who was this peculiar-looking man who said he had been expecting him? How did he know but this was some trap into which strangers were beguiled?

"Why do you hesitate?" asked the man, noting his indecision.

"I'd like to know how it is that you expected me? I am a stranger to you and to this neighborhood," said Joe.

The man smiled in a mysterious way.

"Perhaps I saw you coming along the road from the cupola of the house. The bag and stick you carry suggest that you are tramping your way to Chester, perhaps in search of work. Well, you need go no further to look for employment. I am in need of an assistant in my business. I will provide you with board and lodging and pay you good wages, if you will take service with me."

"What kind of work have you for me to do?"

"We will talk about that after you have rested and refreshed yourself."

"Say, how is it that I heard your voice at the gate when it opened to admit me?"

"The voice you heard at the gate was merely myself speaking to you through a tube that runs from my reception room under the ground to the gate. I not only spoke to you from that room, but also opened the gate by a simple mechanical contrivance which does away with the necessity of employing a servant to do it. This is an age of labor-saving devices, and I have installed many of them in this house. But you are keeping me waiting here, young man, as well as incommoding yourself by standing outside. Enter so that we may become better acquainted."

Joe hesitated no longer. He walked in and the master of the house closed the door and bade him follow.

CHAPTER II.—The Strange House.

The Egyptian astrologer led Joe into his reception room. It was low ceiled, like the hall, and like all the other rooms on the ground floor. A magnificent brass lamp, swinging by chains from the center of the ceiling, furnished illumination, in a soft kind of radiance reflected by a combination of colored prisms. The room itself was decorated in as near an approach to Egyptian style as modern art could effect. Joe was much impressed by the room and regarded the man with some awe.

"Now, young man, what is your name?" said the astrologer.

"Joe Graham."

"I was right when I surmised you were tramping from one place to another in search of work?"

"Yes."

"From which I conclude that you have no home nor friends on whom you can call for help?"

"I have an uncle, Silas Green, with whom I have been living for two years, but we didn't get along well together, so I left him three days ago and started out to reach Philadelphia with the idea of paddling my own canoe."

"I see. You are self-reliant and ambitious. You look like a sharp boy. I summed you up as such when I saw you in my magic crystal."

"Saw me in your magic crystal!" exclaimed the puzzled boy. "What do you mean by that?"

"You shall learn in good time. My name is—well, I am publicly known as Etiocles, the Egyptian fortune-teller and astrologer. I do business in the past, present and future of my clients, of which I have a large number, who visit me here regularly, or at my rooms in Philadelphia, where I hold audiences twice a week, on Tuesdays and Fridays. As a rule, I am waited on only by the elite, as my prices are high, though I make reductions to those whose circumstances will not permit them to pay my regular rates. It is necessary for me to have a confidential assistant. The young man who has acted in that capacity was obliged to leave me to return to his native land to claim a patrimony left him by the death of his mother. I am therefore greatly in need of some one I can trust to take his place. The situation is open to you, for I am satisfied, after sizing you up, that you will fill the bill when duly instructed. Your pay will be \$10 a week and your keep and, of course, I pay all incidental expenses in connection with the business."

"Ten dollars a week and my keep!" exclaimed Joe, impressed by what seemed to him astonishingly liberal pay.

"Yes. In return for which you are to follow all my instructions and make yourself as useful as possible."

"That suits me. I'll go to work for you."

"Very good. The matter is settled. Now, remember one thing: our relations are to be strictly confidential. You must not hold any communication with outsiders about my business, on any pretext whatever, except in line with instructions from me. Do you understand?"

"I agree to that if your business is on the square."

"It's square enough. You see, I am a man of extraordinary natural attainments, and I am selling the results of my skill to the public. I happen to be the seventh son of a seventh son, and in consequence I am endowed with second sight and other remarkable qualities denied the ordinary run of mankind. In the polished surface of my magic crystal I can read the past, present or future of any one, whether he be present or not. In my magic mirror I can, under certain conditions, reveal to the earnest inquirer incidents that have happened during his life, or will happen at some future time. As an astrologer, I can cast the horoscope of any person who submits to me the exact date of his birth. If he can get it down to the minute, I guarantee that the reading will be absolutely infallible. I can also read one's past, present and future by his hand, but that is mere child's play, since everything connected with one's existence appears in his hands in lines, and mounds, and other combinations which I have

no time now to explain to you, but which you will gradually learn in time."

The estimate that Joe's employer placed upon himself caused the boy to regard him with added respect and awe, although he had a suspicion that he was a fakir.

"Now, come with me and I'll show you my audience chamber," said the astrologer.

Joe followed him through a doorway covered with a heavy, dark-red curtain. The room they entered was small and dark. The Egyptian turned up another bronze hanging lamp and Joe beheld more hieroglyphics and pictures, and another star-studded ceiling. The floor was bare, but polished to a high luster. In the four corners of the room were bracket shelves on which were perched four large, stuffed owls, their great, open eyes staring down at the object which stood on the big desk in the center of the room. This object was covered with a piece of black velvet.

"Step up and I will show you my magic crystal," said the astrologer.

Joe walked to the table and his employer raised the velvet and revealed a small globe of crystal. It glittered and sparkled under the light of the lamp.

"I purchased that of an Arabian philosopher and astrologer in Mecca. Its properties are marvelous in the hands of one fitted by nature to call its mystic secrets into action. To an ordinary person it can never be anything else than as you view it—a globe of crystal," said the Egyptian, dropping the velvet upon it again.

"You can see things in it, can you?" said Joe skeptically.

"As you see your reflection in a mirror. A short time ago, as I was gazing upon it, as I often do for an inspiration, wondering where I would get a capable and trustworthy assistant to replace the lad who left me yesterday, the shiny surface suddenly became dulled as if by a cloud of mist or smoke. That told me the crystal was about to solve the difficulty for me. The mist slowly thinned and then I found myself gazing upon a section of the country road, and there I beheld you trudging along, grip and stick in hand, your clothes shaking in the cold blasts of wind that blew across the landscape," said the astrologer. "I knew at once that you were being pointed out as the fitting successor of my late assistant. I studied you attentively for the brief interval that the vision remained on the crystal, and I was satisfied you would do. What followed, you know. The sudden coming of the rain as you reached this place caused you to look for shelter, and I did the rest."

Joe was a bit staggered by this alleged evidence of the magic crystal's powers, and looked at its velvet covering. He believed the man was lying.

"Now, look yonder," said the Egyptian, pointing to another heavy, dark-red curtain which covered the center of one of the walls.

Unnoticed by the boy, he pressed a button in his table. Instantly the curtain rolled aside in two parts, apparently without the aid of hands, and there Joe saw his figure reflected in a large mirror, set in a frame made of oxidized metal.

"That is my magic mirror," said the astrologer.

"Can you see things in it like you do in the crystal globe?" asked Joe, grinning.

"Scenes from the past, present and future can be made to appear on its surface like the modern moving pictures, but only under certain favorable conditions," said the Egyptian.

From the audience chamber the Egyptian led Joe into his laboratory. This room gave evidence that the man was familiar with the science of chemistry in all its branches. The floor and a long bench were littered with test-tubes, retorts, syphons and vessels of many shapes and sizes, mostly made of glass. There was another room off the laboratory which Joe did not see then. This was the astrologer's private den. It was comfortably furnished, with a rug, modern chairs, a table and a desk. A fair-sized safe stood behind the desk on the other side of the window overlooking the garden. The walls were hung with maps and charts, astronomical diagrams and scrolls covered with cabalistic figures.

Stuffed owls and other birds stood around on shelves between skulls, bones and fossils. Hanging from the center of the ceiling was a small alligator, looking quite lifelike, with its jaws wide open. While the astrologer was explaining the uses of various vessels in his laboratory, a bell rang in another part of the house.

"That is the first bell for supper," he said. "The meal will be served in ten minutes. I dare say you are hungry."

"Bet your life I am! A long walk sharpens a chap's appetite," replied Joe.

"Come back to the reception room and get your grip, and then I'll show you to the room you are to occupy."

The astrologer preceded him up to the next floor, by way of a broad staircase at the back of the hall and introduced him to his bedchamber, a comfortable square room that had nothing in it suggestive of the calling of his employer.

"You will find water, towels and everything needful to freshen you up after your journey," said the Egyptian, lighting an ordinary lamp. "When the bell rings again come down and I will meet you in the hall."

In another moment he was alone, and as he proceeded to make himself presentable he could not help wondering at his strange luck in introducing him to a situation so widely different from anything his mind had ever conceived.

CHAPTER III.—The Drop of Ink.

He was brushing his hair when the second bell rang, so he made haste to join the astrologer in the hall below. He was taken into the living room, which was furnished in substantial oak, with a dining table, half a dozen leather upholstered chairs, a rug, a sideboard and other things in keeping. Here he was introduced to the housekeeper—a cheerful-looking woman of fifty, for whom the boy felt an immediate liking. Her name was Mrs. Pickett.

"Where is Amina?" asked Etiocles of the housekeeper.

Before the woman could reply a small door at the end of the room opened and Joe was treated to a vision of beauty that quite took his breath. The new arrival was a girl between fifteen and sixteen years of age, but her exquisitely molded

figure was as well developed as most girls of eighteen. Her skin was a dark olive, and her eyes were a lustrous black. She was a native of Arabia, and had been brought to America by the astrologer, who was her guardian.

"Amina, this is my new assistant, Joseph Graham," said Etiocles.

The girl smiled and bowed in a self-possessed way, and Joe returned the salutation rather awkwardly. She seated herself opposite Joe, and supper proceeded forthwith. Etiocles explained to her how his new assistant had come upon the scene, and finally addressed Joe in English, her foreign accent rendering the words somewhat musical to his ears. She said she hoped he would like the place, which she thought was well suited to a boy of his seeming talents. The implied compliment pleased Joe and drew him toward her.

"I guess I will," he replied. "I'll do my best to satisfy Mr. Etiocles, at any rate."

Amina and her guardian exchanged glances and smiled—Joe wondered at what. Supper over, the astrologer retired to his den to smoke and pass the evening in his own way, leaving Joe and the fair Arabian together to get better acquainted, which they proceeded to do while Mrs. Pickett sat down to her own supper.

"We will sit on the lounge," said Amina, waving her hand toward it.

Joe had no objection, and as a commencement said that she spoke English first-rate for a foreigner.

"Ah, yes, I am quick to learn the language," she answered, with a smile that displayed her pearly teeth. "I speak French and German even better than I do the English. The Arabian language is my native tongue."

"You must be smart to be able to pick up languages so quick. English is good enough for me, for I don't expect to have occasion to use any other," said Joe.

"You cannot tell. In this country all languages are spoken because people from every country come here to make money. It would be convenient to understand several languages."

"I suppose it would. By the way, I would like to ask you something: Does Mr. Etiocles see pictures in that magic crystal of his?"

"You must not ask me questions about his mystic art. He does not like to have it discussed in the house," she replied evasively.

"Well, he told me that he saw me in it coming along the road while I was some distance from the house. If that is true, it must be a wonderful thing to have. It does not seem natural to me that a round piece of crystal can possess such remarkable properties."

"Ah! you do not understand these things. The crystal of itself does not possess the power of producing pictures. It is merely the agency. You might gaze at it all day and would see nothing but a dim reflection of your face. My guardian is gifted by nature to bring upon its polished surface whatever he—but there, I am treading on forbidden ground."

"He told me that he was the seventh son of a seventh son, and that is how he manages to do many wonderful things," said Joe.

"My father could do more wonderful things than he, and some of his ability has come to me.

He taught me how to see living pictures in a drop of ink."

"What! See pictures in a drop of ink!" ejaculated Joe, astonished.

She nodded in a convincing way.

"I wish you'd give me a specimen of your talents in that direction," he said.

"Ah, you doubt me?" she smiled.

"Oh, no, I don't doubt you," said Joe, who felt it wouldn't be polite to say that, "but I am interested in seeing the thing done."

"I am not always in the right mental state to do it," she said, "but I will try to oblige you. Remain here while I go for the ink."

Amina hurried away to the astrologer's sanctum, where she had a short talk with him. When she returned she brought with her a small bottle of ink in her hand.

"Now, I am going to pour a little ink in the palm of your hand. You must hold your hand perfectly steady, remember, and do not, on any account, utter a sound while I am engaged in the mystic rite."

"I'll be as mute as a mopstick, Miss Amina," said Joe.

"Nay, do not call me miss. I am Amina to you as to all who know me. Now before I begin, tell me what you most wish I should see."

"I'd like you to get a sight of my Uncle Silas. Tell me where he is now and what he is doing."

"I will try. Be silent."

She took Joe's right hand and pulled it toward her. Into the palm she let a little of the ink fall so that it formed one large drop, over which she bent with seeming attention. Joe looked hard at the ink, too, wondering if she conjured up a picture whether he would be able to see it also. It was some moments before she spoke. Then she muttered some unintelligible words in Arabic. Another brief silence followed.

"Ah! a mist is coming over the ink. It is expanding, like a mirror. I shall succeed," she said, in her musical English.

Joe strained his eyes, but saw no change in the big drop of ink.

"The mirror of Cleopatra is now before me, a black, shining surface, like a deep lake in the sable depths of which lie hidden the mysteries of life."

She began to mutter a kind of incantation in Arabic.

"Now it glistens like the sea under the soft radiance of the moonbeams. It is becoming transparent in the center. The break widens out, like a curtain drawn aside, and I see—yes, the inside of a store."

"Gosh!" breathed Joe.

"A country store, where many things of different kinds are for sale. Several men are in the place, seated around a stove, and they are talking, but I cannot hear what they are saying. Sound is hushed in the mirror of ink. At a desk at the end of a long counter a man is sitting on a stool. He is an old man with a smooth face, and looks rather thin and bad-humored. I think he is the owner of the store. Now a customer, a girl with light hair and a shawl over her head, enters with a jug. She hands it to the old man, who goes to the back of the store and fills it from the last key in a row of five."

"Gee!" breathed Joe again, for Amina had ex-

actly described things in the store, as he remembered them.

"The girl is speaking. I can see her lips move. They form the words, 'Where is Joe?' The old man says nothing, but he looks angry. Now, a little dog, with a brass collar, comes running from behind——"

"That's Sancho!" cried Joe, forgetting himself.

Amina stopped and pushed his hand away.

"You have broken the spell. The mirror of Cleopatra has become nothing but a drop of ink again," she said.

"It doesn't matter," said Joe. "You have told me enough to prove that you can see real things in a drop of ink. Blessed if I know how you can do it."

"It is a gift, with knowledge added," she replied, with a smile.

"Why, you can do as well with a drop of ink as Mr. Etiocles says he can do with the magic crystal. You are certainly a wonder," said Joe.

Amina smiled. She had given him a picture of his uncle's store, of his uncle, the bunch of habitues who chewed the rag around the stove every night, a girl whom he recognized as a neighbor by the name of Maggie; but what struck him as most astonishing was her description of the pet dog Sancho. How had she done it? Joe was satisfied that she was a peculiarly gifted girl, or else she had been in the store, saw it, and described what she had once actually seen.

CHAPTER IV.—Joe Parts from the Astrologer.

When Joe awoke next morning the sun was shining in at his window. While dressing, he glanced occasionally out into the yard. There he saw a dark-featured man working about a large touring auto that stood in the building built for it. He subsequently found out that this man was a Syrian, employed as gardener, chauffeur and man-of-all-work about the place. He was preparing the machine for its semi-weekly trip to Philadelphia that day. Joe met Amina and the astrologer in the living-room, and after breakfast he was taken into the audience chamber by Etiocles.

"You are to accompany me to Philadelphia," said the astrologer, who then proceeded to instruct him concerning his duties at the astrologer's rooms in the city when they arrived there.

He learned that Etiocles devoted his time in Philadelphia solely to palmistry and to taking orders for horoscopes, which he worked out later at home. People who wanted readings from the magic crystal, and desired to penetrate the mystery of the magic mirror, had to come to his residence and pay a stiff price. The start was made at nine o'clock in the auto, and they reached the chambers at eleven. Visitors were received between noon and three. Joe, attired in a quaint Egyptian costume, which he assumed on their arrival, received the callers, showed them into the waiting room and afterward took them in singly into the presence of the astrologer. Etiocles assumed no strange costume to impress his patrons. He knew better than that, for he was dealing with people who were too intelligent to be imposed upon by an outward show of quack-

ery. But these persons had great faith in the science of astrology as practiced in up-to-date style, and in the mysteries of palmistry. Still, there were many who came to be convinced, and not one but went away fully satisfied that the Egyptian astrologer was able to do everything he advertised. Joe was at times an invisible observer of what transpired in the audience room, and he knew from the way the clients were impressed that his employer astonished them by his revelations.

The boy had only the crudest ideas of palm reading, and he was amazed at what his employer found in the hands of his patrons. After each visitor retired, Etiocles made sundry notes in a book he kept on his table for that purpose, and these notes often came in handy to him afterward, when the visitor paid him a second visit. When business was over for the day the astrologer took Joe with him to a good restaurant, where they had dinner, after which they returned home. On the following day the astrologer received visitors from Chester at his residence, as well as those who journeyed from Philadelphia to consult the magic crystal. As the days went by and the boy grew more accustomed to his new occupation, he began to see that aside from astrology and palmistry, there was a lot of bluff and quackery in his employer's business.

Although he had a soft job, and got his money regularly at the end of each week, he was not wholly satisfied. He no longer regarded the astrologer with awe, though he respected the man's knowledge, which he found was very extensive. He was much taken with Amina, who evidently regarded him with favor, but he could not get her to repeat the drop of ink mystery. She read his fortune in his hands, and told him that he would be successful in life, make a lot of money, and marry the girl of his heart.

"You will make your mark in business," she said, "for you are a sharp boy."

"What business will I make my mark in?" he asked her.

"Ah! that I cannot tell. I can only say that you are specially fitted to engage in any kind of money-making business. You may strike the right one the first time, or you may take up with several before you are finally suited."

"Then you don't think the position I am holding here is what I am fitted for?"

"This is but a temporary stage in your career. It will provide you with some money to help you make a regular start when the time comes."

"When will that time come?"

The girl smiled and shrugged her shoulders.

"Are you anxious to make a change already?" she asked. "Do you wish to leave us now that we are pretty well acquainted?"

"Oh, no, I'm in no hurry. I only asked the question."

The time was coming quicker than either of them dreamed. One morning a great jewel robbery was reported in the Philadelphia newspapers. A leader in society's exclusive set had given a grand ball the night before to which the Quaker City's "400" had been invited, and everything apparently went off as merrily as a marriage bell. The lady of the house had taken over \$150,000 worth of diamond jewelry out of the strong vaults of her safe deposit company to

grace her person with on this occasion. She was known to possess the most magnificent collection of personal gems in the city, and when she was fully decked out to receive her guests she presented a strikingly glittering picture.

A dozen private detectives had been employed to mingle with the guests and keep a sharp eye on everything, for those invited wore small fortunes in gems, too. Among the detectives were two dark-featured, foreign-looking men, who had been recommended to the madame as two of the shrewdest sleuths of Europe. These men, the recommendation said, had been employed at the most important functions all over Europe, where royalty and titled people congregated at important balls and state functions. The madame was told, confidentially, that these two sleuths were in this country on a still hunt after a stolen diadem worth a quarter of a million. The thieves were known to be men of high standing in European society, who were believed to have brought their booty to the United States to dispose of it piecemeal.

As the more important gems were known, and had a history, with which the detectives were familiar, their purpose was to attend all the high-class functions in this country to see if they could spot any of the jewels in the possession of wealthy guests. In case any of these jewels were identified, the sleuths would then have a clue to work on. Such was the story told to the lady who gave this ball, and she willingly included the foreigners among the officers hired for the night. When the ball was over, and the guests had departed, the detectives went away, too, but four fresh ones had been hired to watch the house outside until the lady got up and was ready to send her jewels back to the safe-deposit company, under their watchful eye. In the meantime, the lady, on disrobing, deposited her valuables in the private wall safe in her room. When she was awakened by her maid at the appointed hour and had had a light breakfast, she called her trusted butler to carry her gems to the safe-deposit vault. When the door of the wall safe was opened, everything that had been placed in it was found to be missing. All the foregoing facts, save the presence of the two foreign detectives in the house during the ball, which the lady had requested to keep a strict secret, came out in the papers.

Joe was in Philadelphia that day with the astrologer, and read all the facts. He talked it over with his employer at dinner.

"You ought to be able to discover the identity of the thieves with the help of your magic mirror," said the boy, though, privately, he had his doubts about the astrologer's ability to find anything out by that means. For reasons, he had lost confidence in the magic crystal. And he had positive evidence that the magic mirror was a fake. The only thing he did put real stock in was Etiocles' expertness in the sciences of astrology and in palmistry. There was no doubt that he was a past-master in these two things.

"Should I be consulted by the proper person, I will do my best to throw all the light I can on the robbery," Etiocles replied; "otherwise I shall not interest myself in the matter."

On the following day a big auto drew up before the gate of the astrologer's house. Joe, who was

on the watch for visitors, pushed the button that opened the gate, and then bellowed the word, "Enter," through the speaking tube. This contrivance always furnished him a lot of amusement, unknown to his employer. He would talk through it whenever he saw a boy pause to look in through the bars of the gate, and it tickled him to see the consternation with which the youth heard it and then took to his heels. Without being aware of the fact, Joe was giving his employer a very uncanny reputation. The auto wheeled in through the gate and ran up to the porch. It contained two ladies, in sealskins, and the chauffeur.

Joe, attired in a modified Egyptian costume, opened the door and received the ladies, ushering them into the reception room. When the handsomest of the two handed Joe her card, he recognized her as the lady who had been robbed after the ball. He easily guessed the errand that brought her to see the astrologer.

"I will inform the Egyptian of your arrival, though I believe he has been expecting you," said Joe.

"Expecting us!" exclaimed the lady.

"His art usually tells him who will call on him here," replied Joe, following his regular instructions.

The ladies looked at one another, while the boy, with a low bow, retired through the drapery of the door. He knew that Etiocles was in his den, poring over some old book treating on alchemy, for lately he had taken a sudden interest in that exploded science. Those who had practiced what is called alchemy during the dark ages, in Europe, were the forerunners of those more advanced men who gradually established the science of chemistry, which treats of the composition of substances and the changes which they undergo. Joe announced to the astrologer the presence of the two visitors in the reception room, handing his employer the lady's card and remarking that she had evidently come to get some light on the robbery of her gems. Etiocles smiled grimly and told Joe to await him in the audience chamber.

When the astrologer was ready, he told the boy to show the lady of the card in. What transpired at the interview Joe was not in a position to learn, but when he and his employer visited Philadelphia on Friday he read in the paper the news, under a scare heading, of the capture of the thieves and the recovery of the gems. They proved to be the two dark-skinned foreigners who had posed as detectives at the ball. They secured the job through a forged letter, and their object was the robbery they had so skilfully executed.

They were caught on board an outward-bound liner, en route to Italy, and the paper stated that the clue to their identity and apprehension had been furnished by the famous Egyptian astrologer, Etiocles. Joe was rather astonished, for he did not have such great faith in the powers of his employer. He was not aware that astrology is divided into three branches, one of which concerns itself with lost and stolen articles, missing people, and so forth. After obtaining full data for his purpose, the astrologer had made his figures in horoscopic form, and obtained enough insight into the case to put two and two together, for he had questioned the lady closely and drawn

from her the facts concerning the foreign detectives, and decided that the dark-skinned men were the guilty parties.

He received a check for \$10,000 for his information, and his reputation got a boost that rendered further advertising superfluous. A week later the young man whose place Joe had taken reappeared at the house. After an interview with the astrologer, Etiocles called Joe into his den and told him that the time had come when they must part.

"You have served me faithfully, Graham, and as an evidence of my appreciation of your services, I present you with \$100, in addition to this week's wages," said the astrologer. "You can pack up and depart in the morning. If you ever need a favor, financial or otherwise, don't fail to call on me, or write. I will grant it at once. I believe, however, that you will get along in the world without assistance from any one, for success is written in your hand, and the evidence there is infallible."

On the whole, Joe was not much put out at losing his good job. He had saved nearly the whole of his wages, and the extra \$100 made him now worth \$200. His ambition was to get into some kind of small business and push his way to the front. He packed his grip after supper, and after breakfast next morning bade the astrologer, Amina and Mrs. Pickett good-by, promising to write at no distant day.

With his grip in one hand and his stick in the other, just as he arrived at the old house, he departed, with the future before him, for Chester.

CHAPTER V.—Joe Goes into Business.

Fifteen minutes after leaving the house of the astrologer, Joe entered the outskirts of Chester. Here the houses were somewhat scattered. As he approached a neat cottage, surrounded by several acres of ground, Joe saw a sign tacked up on a post facing the road. It read:

"Partner wanted in the fruit and vegetable business."

Joe stopped and looked at it.

"I guess that would suit me first-rate as a starter," he thought. "I'll go in and investigate the business."

So he opened the gate, marched up to the door and rang the bell. In a few minutes the door was opened by a pretty girl of fifteen.

"I have called with reference to that sign outside," said Joe.

"Walk in," replied the girl.

She led him into the living room of the cottage. There she saw a middle-aged man stretched on the lounge with the looks of an invalid.

"Father," said the girl, "this boy has called about the business."

The man, who looked as if he had been a hard worker, raised himself up a bit on his pillow and eyed the boy sharply.

"Take a seat," he said, in a hoarse voice, "and I will talk to you."

Joe put down his grip and stick and drew up a chair.

"To begin with, what is your name?" asked the man.

"Joe Graham."

"Do you live in Chester?"

"No, sir. I have no home at all. I was on my way to Philadelphia, by way of Chester, when your sign attracted me. I intend to embark in some kind of business in a small way, and it struck me that the fruit and vegetable business would answer very well, if a half interest didn't cost me too much."

"Have you got \$100?" asked the man.

"Yes."

"A half interest in my business is really worth more than that, but owing to my unfortunate predicament—I am laid up with inflammatory rheumatism—I have to make some sacrifice. I have a paying route in Chester—cash customers whom I supply with vegetables and fruit, grown on my place here, for the greater part of the year. My customers have lately been neglected, and unless I send my wagon out in proper hands the business will be lost to me, and that I cannot well afford. That is why I am willing to make a liberable concession to an honest, hustling young man. You look to be both, and I am bound to say that I like your face."

"You haven't told me your name," said Joe.

"My name is Jason Bridge. I have lived in this place for ten years past, and during a part of that time I worked on the railroad. Two years ago I started in the fruit and vegetable business, and by giving a good article at a fair price I have made a success of it. That success you will share in if you agree to take hold and do the selling. My wife, daughter and son attend to the supply end. The investment of \$100 will give you a half interest in the horse and wagon, and entitled you to half the profits above the actual cost of raising the stuff. That cost includes a small compensation to my wife and two children, based on the hours they put in at the work. The other expenses I will explain to you in detail if you decide on going in with me."

"How much do you think my share ought to average up?"

"It will vary, according to the market, but will run between \$10 and \$12 a week."

"You think I can count on \$10?"

"I do, for I have made myself between \$20 and \$30 a week right along during the season last year. Of course, you won't make as much now as when the fruit season is on, but we were calculating on the yearly average during, say, eight months."

"I suppose I'd have to start out very early and work till dark?"

"You'd have to leave with the wagon about half-past six, but you'd have to be on hand to help load up before that. If you have no regular home I could fix it so you could live with us, at a reasonable charge, which my wife will fix."

"I've been accustomed to getting up early during the last two years, except for the past ten weeks, for I worked for my uncle in his general store at the village of Dexter, about fifty miles from here. I am used to hard work, for I had to hustle at the store from the time I got up to do the early chores for the housekeeper till we closed up at nine o'clock in the evening. During a part of the morning I went around the village to take orders and deliver what was ordered the

day before. In the afternoon and evening I waited on customers at the store."

"Then you won't find this business so hard on you," said Bridge.

After some further talk Joe agreed to buy a half interest in the business, and get on the job right away. He said it would suit him first-rate to stay at the cottage, for then he would be right on the ground. Bridge called his wife and asked her what she would charge Joe for his room and board.

"He's going to buy a half interest in my business," he said, "and it would be an advantage for him to live with us."

Mrs. Bridge said she would board Joe for \$3.50 a week, and the boy agreed to pay that out of his share of profits. Bridge then asked his wife to show Joe over the place and explain everything to him.

"My son, Dick, is at school, or he would take you in hand," said the invalid. "You will meet him at dinner."

Joe inspected the property, with its fruit trees and vegetable ground, looked at the horse and the wagon, and then returned to the cottage, quite satisfied. He paid Bridge the \$100, and said he thought it would be a good idea for him to start out after dinner with the wagon and get acquainted with the lay of a part of his route, at any rate, and make the acquaintance of as many of his customers as possible. Bridge agreed that that would be a good idea, and said he would furnish him with the names and addresses of his customers.

"In the meantime you can put an afternoon's supply of stuff into the wagon and I will make up the prices you are to sell at from the market list which I get every morning in the paper."

Joe was shown to the room he was to occupy, and he unpacked his things. Then he went down to the yard and offered to help Mrs. Bridge in any way he could make himself useful. He was told to go out into the vegetable patch and help Jessie Bridge gather the supply of vegetables he intended to carry out with him that afternoon. Being the last week in May, it was early yet for many vegetables. His list for the afternoon consisted of radishes, lettuce, rhubarb, some early peas and beans that had been forced under glass, old potatoes from the cottage cellar, and some strawberries helped forward under glass. Bridge himself to these added apples, oranges, bananas and mixed nuts, all of which he had to purchase in the Chester market. Joe would have to dispense with these till he got the route down fine and could spare the time to get them. The strawberries, being a bit ahead of the season, were bound to go at a stiff price, so Bridge said, when Joe returned to the living room before dinner to announce that he was ready to make his start.

Bridge then told him that when the rheumatism first got him and put him down and out he had hired a stout boy to do the selling, at regular wages. The boy proved to be no hustler and, what was worse, dishonest, for he held back some of the sales money and then lied to account for the lack of it. The second boy he got proved incapable, and so Bridge made up his mind that he would have to get a partner if he hoped to keep his trade together. He had had several applicants, but they did not size up to suit him,

and he declined to take any one of them on. He believed Joe was as close to his standard as he could hope to get, and congratulated himself on coming to terms with him.

Dick Bridge came from school to get his dinner, and was introduced to Joe. The boys liked each other at sight, and did not doubt but they would become good friends. After dinner Joe started out with the wagon, a list of the customers and some general directions concerning the streets in the locality where he was going. Bridge did not expect much in the way of results from him till he got the hang of the route, knowing that he was a perfect stranger to Chester. With the aid of his directions, and inquiries made of storekeepers, Joe finally reached the first street where his customers lived.

"Dear me, are you Mr. Bridge's new boy?" said the lady he called on first. "You are the third since he was taken sick himself, and I've been waiting three days for the wagon. I had to send to a store, three blocks from here, to get what I wanted, and it was very inconvenient. Will you come regularly after this?"

"I certainly will, madam, for I am Mr. Bridge's partner," replied Joe politely.

"I didn't know he had a partner. He never mentioned the fact to me."

"I only became his partner this morning. He has the rheumatism so bad that he cannot possibly come out with the wagon for some time, and as the two boys he had proved unsatisfactory, he decided that the best way out of the difficulty was to take a partner who would take a personal interest in the business."

"I'm glad to hear that, for now I'll expect to see you every day. Well, what have you got today?"

Joe told her. She ordered several vegetables, and then said:

"You say you have strawberries? How do you sell them?"

"Twenty cents a box."

"Dear me! They are expensive."

"It's early for strawberries yet. These were ripened under glass. I believe dealers are getting a quarter for hothouse berries. I'll guarantee that these are worth the money."

"Well, bring me in a box and I'll look at them."

Joe did so when he came back with the vegetables, and the lady concluded to take the berries. Our young merchant met with about the same experience wherever he called. The women had been watching for the Bridge wagon, which was convenient for them to buy from, and had been compelled to buy from the nearest store for the last few days, and pay higher prices than Bridge had charged them. By dark Joe had sold out nearly all his stock, and then he retraced his way to the cottage.

He had managed to call on about half of the customers, and next day, by starting out early, he hoped to go over the entire route and get it fixed in his mind. When he made his report to Bridge, after putting up the horse and wagon, the senior partner was more than pleased with his success. It satisfied him that he had made no mistake in taking the boy in with him. He told his wife that Joe was a sharp boy and well able to hold his end up.

"He'll do as well as I did as soon as he gets

thoroughly broken in," he said. "I am lucky to have secured such a partner. We must treat him well and make the place feel like home to him. Then he'll be satisfied with his investment."

Mrs. Bridge served an excellent supper, and as Joe had a good appetite he did full justice to it. He gave the family an account of his life with his uncle, but said nothing about his ten weeks of service with the astrologer, for he knew that many people in that neighborhood were not favorably disposed toward Etiocles, the Egyptian. Some regarded the man as a quack, pure and simple; some disliked him on general principles, while others feared him as the people in olden times dread contact with a necromancer, who in those days was popularly supposed to be on intimate relations with Old Nick.

CHAPTER VI.—Joe Foils the Tramps.

After supper Dick and Joe retired to the former's room to get better acquainted.

"Do you play whist or euchre?" asked Dick.

"I can play both," replied Joe.

"Want to have a game?"

"I don't mind."

So Dick got out a pack of cards and they started a game of whist.

"Dad thinks you did corking well this afternoon," said Dick, as he dealt out the cards.

"I'm glad he's satisfied. I did my best to make a showing."

"Considering that you're a stranger in Chester, and to the business as well, you certainly did fine."

"I believe in doing things right up to the hundle. A fellow has got to do the best he knows how if he expects to succeed in life."

"That's right. By the way, where and how did you put in your time since you left your uncle's store? You said you shook him ten weeks ago."

"I had a job not half a mile from here."

"Is that so? Who were you working for?"

"You'd never guess."

"How could I?"

"If I tell you, will you keep it to yourself?"

"Sure, if you don't want it known."

"Oh, I don't care about that particularly. I'm not ashamed of what I did, but some people have strange ideas about astrologers."

"Astrologers!"

"Yes. I was employed during those ten weeks by Etiocles, the Egyptian, who lives down the road in that old Revolutionary house."

"The dickens you were!" ejaculated Dick, looking at Joe in astonishment.

"Surest thing you know. I acted as his general assistant, and accompanied him to Philadelphia in his auto twice a week."

Dick looked quite staggered, for he knew that the astrologer had an uncanny reputation in the neighborhood.

"It's your lead," said Joe.

Dick mechanically played an ace, which Dick trumped and took in. The boys played several games and finally Joe said he was going to bed, as he had to get up early. Dick had to get up early, too, to help pick a supply of vegetables and strawberries. They were both up early. By the

time Joe had the horse harnessed up breakfast was ready.

Dick said he'd go with him a part of the way, as he had a couple of hours to spare before school. Under Dick's guidance Joe reached the first part of his route by a short cut, and while he waited on one customer young Bridge called on the next one. In this way they got over the first part of the route faster than usual. At eight o'clock Dick left him to go to school. Around noon Joe ate a cold lunch he had brought with him. He washed the meal down with a pint of cold coffee, and at the next house he stopped as he took the jug with him to rinse out at the yard faucet. A couple of tramps came along while he was talking with the woman. They stopped and looked at the horse and wagon. Looking around and seeing that the coast was clear, one of them sprang upon the seat.

"Jump up behind, Bill!" he said, taking up the reins.

Bill started to do it when he saw Joe coming out of the yard and sized him up as the owner of the rig. He uttered a warning shout to his pal. That rascal turned, saw the boy, and with great nerve started the horse with a lash of the whip.

"Hi, there, what are you doing?" cried Joe.

Quick as a wink the boy threw the jug. It hit the fellow squarely in the breast and knocked him off the wagon. The horse kept on down the block with Joe in full chase.

CHAPTER VII.—Joe Is Held up at Night.

The horse ran as far as the next street and then stopped of his own accord. Joe got on the seat and started him back, keeping his eye on the lookout for the tramps, but they had disappeared. The boy went over his whole route that day, but toward the end of it his supply of vegetables was so far gone that he could not meet all of his orders. It was then close on to dark. He promised the customers at that end, whom he could only partially supply, that he would be on hand early in the morning. His plan was to begin at that end of the route every other day, so as to give all his customers an even deal. Supper was over when he got back to the cottage, but Mrs. Bridge was keeping his portion warm in the oven for him. He turned the day's receipts in to Bridge, who acted as treasurer, and was complimented again for the good showing he had made.

"You're doing better than I expected," said his partner. "The firm will get on famously at this rate."

"I'm out to make money," said Joe, "and I don't believe in going to sleep over it. I'm accustomed to hustle, and it's a whole lot more satisfactory to hustle for one's self and partner than for other people."

Bridge nodded.

"You'll get a square deal from me," he said, "for I appreciate your efforts, and I'd be a fool if I didn't treat you right."

Joe concluded to make a call that evening on the astrologer and acquaint him with his new line of action, so when he finished his supper he told Bridge that he was going out for a while.

"You're at liberty to go and come when you choose after business hours," said Bridge. "We go to bed about ten. If you expect to be out later you'd better get the key of the front door from my wife."

Joe said he didn't intend to stay out long, but he'd take the key, anyway. He shortly after started out for Etiocles' house. The astrologer gave him a warm welcome, and to him the boy recounted his business venture. Etiocles congratulated him on getting settled so soon, and told him he saw no reason why he wouldn't get along successfully. He remained till ten o'clock, and then Albert accompanied him to the gate and let him out in the road.

Joe started for his new home at a brisk pace. It was a warm, cloudy night, and it looked as if it might rain before morning. The boy had covered half the distance to the Bridge cottage when suddenly two trampish-looking men jumped out from a clump of bushes, and one of them ordered him to throw up his hands. Joe saw that he was the victim of a hold-up, and though he had very little money about him, he was unwilling to lose it. So instead of obeying the order, he pitched into the men with his fists. The rascals, however, were provided with short cudgels, and one of them gave him a tap on the head that sent him to the ground, momentarily dazed. While he was in that condition they went through his clothes and took the eighty cents he had. Then they dragged him into the bushes and left him there, believing he would be insensible for some time.

"Eighty cents is better than nothin'," he heard one of the men say, lighting a short black pipe.

"I thought he had more, for he dressed pretty decent," said the other.

"What do you expect to get out of a boy? They never have much money. You gave him quite a tidy rap. When he comes to, he'll carry a lump home with him. We had better be movin' on. It will take us an hour to reach the factory. Then we've got to lay for the watchman and put him to sleep."

"Suppose we can't entice him outside?" said the other.

"Then we'll force one of the winders and take our chances."

"He's sure to have a revolver, and we're liable to get shot tryin' to get in."

"Leave that to me, Jerry. We'll get in, all right. Then we'll find him and put him out of business before he knows any one is in the place."

"Well, come on, let's get a gait on."

They moved off up the road, and then Joe, who had listened to every word they said, crawled out of the bushes and looked after them.

"I must follow those chaps and put a spoke in their wheel," he said to himself. "The proper lodging for them is behind the bars, and I'm going to see that they get there. That will afford me satisfaction for the clip one of them handed out to me."

He started to shadow the two dark figures up the road, confident that they would lead him to the factory they intended to burglarize.

turned into the road himself he didn't see them at first, but presently he perceived some bright sparks flying into the air from the fellow's pipe. Then he knew where they were and followed after them. After quite a walk they turned into another connecting road near a house. This road took them direct to the factory, which was a mile outside Chester, close to the railroad tracks. A light was burning in the counting room on the ground floor of the building. It shone down on the door of the safe that the rascals had designs on. The light of a lantern was flashing around the factory yard.

The watchman was making one of his tours about the sheds and engine house, much to the satisfaction of the two rascals, who now anticipated catching him without much trouble. It wouldn't be a difficult matter for them to lie low and surprise him in the darkness. As he was an old man, he would fall an easy victim. They crept up on him and before Joe realized what they were up to, for he had lost sight of them in the darkness, he heard a cry and saw the lantern fall to the ground. Then he understood, for the light from the overturned lantern showed to him the two rascals bending down over the watchman.

The men, having bound and gagged the watchman as best they could with a bit of line and a handkerchief, carried him into the factory as soon as they opened the door with the key taken from the man.

"Now what shall I do?" Joe asked himself, staring blankly at the dark building after the rascals had vanished inside with the unconscious watchman. He couldn't do anything alone that would end in the capture of the burglars. Finally he drew near the building and ventured to look in at one of the windows.

He could see nothing, for all was dark in that part of the factory, which happened to be the shipping room. At the end of ten minutes he went up to the door through which the burglars had entered and found that they had fastened it on the inside. Then he remembered having seen a gas jet in the front of the building. The company provided its own lighting plant, for the city gas pipes did not extend out so far on the suburbs. He walked around to the front and found that the rascals had covered both of the windows with newspaper screens, shutting out the sight of the interior of the counting room from the road. However, the end of one of the papers was up about an inch, and Joe was able to get a partial view of the men and what they were doing. One of them was examining the door of the safe while the other held a lighted oil lamp close to the combination handle. On the floor lay the bag which Joe surmised contained burglars' tools. Presently the man at the safe completed his inspection.

Then he dumped the tools out on the floor and picking up a borer, fitted a drill piece into the end of it and selecting a spot near the combination, began operations. Joe watched him for a few minutes and then thought it was time he did something to save the safe from being robbed.

"If I only knew where I could go for assistance at this time of night, but I don't," he muttered.

At that moment he heard the whistle of a locomotive. Looking in the direction of the sound, he saw the headlight of the engine coming in

CHAPTER VIII.—Joe Catches the Burglars.

The two rascals turned up a crossroad near by and Joe temporarily lost sight of them. When he

sight around a curve. There was a freight siding a few hundred yards away on which stood several box cars. The train, which proved to be a freight, came on and began slowing down. At once it occurred to Joe to run down to the track and if the train stopped to tell the conductor about the state of affairs at the factory and get him to send some of the trainhands over to capture the burglars. Acting on the idea, he reached the railroad just as the train stopped to pick up one of the cars from the siding. He went up to one of the men who had a lantern in his hand and found it was the conductor. He hurriedly explained the situation at the factory.

"Is that a fact?" asked the conductor, with a doubtful look.

"Yes, sir; the rascals are at work on the safe in the office now. I overheard one of them say that the pay money of the workers for to-morrow is in the safe. They are after it, and if they are not stopped and captured they will get it. There is nobody around here that I can go to to get their help in time to prevent the robbery, so I ask you to send three or four of your men to nip them in the act. It won't delay you many minutes," said Joe.

He was so earnestly that the conductor could not refuse any longer, and he decided that it was his duty to prevent the crime. He called up several of the trainhands, told them what was going on at the factory, and said they would go there and capture the burglars, if possible. The men were perfectly willing to take a hand in the matter.

"Bring something with which to force the back door," said Joe, so a small crowbar was selected, and each man also carried a stout piece of wood. The boy first took them around to the front of the building and told the conductor where he could get a sight of the inside of the counting room. One of the men showed him the two rascals at work on the safe.

"When we break in the back door, they'll hear us and try to escape by one of these windows," said the conductor. "We'll cut them off. Smith, you and Davis stay here and watch for them."

The conductor and the rest of the party proceeded to the rear of the factory. The back door was forced with as little noise as possible, and the party rushed in. The burglars heard the sounds of their approach, and taking instant alarm one of them threw up a window and leaped out. He was caught by one of the trainmen and thrown to the ground. The other chap, seeing that escape was blocked that way, turned and tried to get away by the door leading into the passage, only to run into Joe's grasp. In another moment he was secured by the bunch. The conductor looked out of the window.

"Have you got one of them?" he asked.

"Yes, we're holding him on the ground," was the reply he received.

"Grab him and fetch him in here," said the conductor.

The two trainmen had a desperate struggle with the burglar, but they finally forced him around into the building, and the pair were presently tied up with binding cord in the office. Joe then took the lamp and went looking for the watchman. He was found behind the door of the sleeping room, having just recovered his

senses. He told how he had been attacked and knocked out.

"We've got the two rascals," said Joe. "And you and I will watch over them until somebody comes in the morning, or I'll watch them while you go and notify the police."

"We can notify the police by telephone."

"Is there a phone in the building?"

"Yes. In the superintendent's room off the counting room."

"All right," returned Joe. "That will save a lot of trouble."

As the conductor was anxious to return to his train with the men, Joe told him the watchman and himself would look after the two crooks and have them locked up. He thanked the conductor for his assistance and said he probably would not be overlooked by the owners of the factory when they had learned all the facts of the case. While the conductor and trainmen were taking their departure, the watchman rang up police headquarters and notified the authorities of the attempted burglary at the factory and the capture of the rascals. He was told that a patrol wagon, with officers, would be sent out right away. When Joe rejoined him he told the watchman how he had euchred the burglars. He explained that he had encountered the rascals first over at the country road, where they had held him up and robbed him of eighty cents, all the money he had in his pocket.

"That's how they put their foot in it, for while they thought me unconscious, I overheard their project to rob the factory safe, and so I followed them over here with the hope of checkmating them. I saw them attack you in the yard, and then carry you into the building, and soon afterward I caught a sight of them at work on the safe. I was in a dilemma how to cheer them, for I didn't know where to go for assistance that I could bring back in time. The coming of the freight train solved the difficulty."

"The company will reward you for saving their money," said the watchman. "You deserve a good reward, for the rascals would have got into the safe but for you."

An hour passed before the police came. Joe told his story to the officers, and they took the crooks away to jail. The watchman had also telephoned the superintendent, and he arrived just as the police were taking the men away. Joe repeated his story again to him and he highly commended the boy's conduct, assuring him that his services would be properly recompensed. Joe started off and got to the cottage about four and immediately turned in and was soon asleep.

CHAPTER IX.—Joe's New Scheme.

Next day he was on his route bright and early and reached every one of his customers. When he got home he found a letter waiting for him from the superintendent of the factory, asking him to send a bill in for whatever loss he had suffered by being compelled to a consultation with Bribe. He called a consultation charge, which was duly paid. At the end of a week he had the route down and was bringing all the customers back.

when he got home to supper he found another letter, this time from the president of the factory. It contained a check for \$150 as an evidence of the company's appreciation of his services in saving the safe from being robbed. That made him worth \$250 cash and a half interest in the fruit and vegetable business, which was easily worth \$150 more. He felt that he was getting on in the world.

As winter approached, Joe watched the papers to see what he could find in the way of a business opportunity. He now had \$350 cash, outside of his interest in the business, and he thought he was financially able to pick up some small business, which he could run for a while himself and afterward hire an assistant to conduct. If he couldn't find anything suitable, he would try for a position for a few months, though he had no great yearning to work for a boss.

One morning he was down at the market early, buying a supply of oranges and some other things to take around on his wagon, when he heard a farmer talking to a dealer about a large walnut-tree grove that he had on his place.

"For two seasons I've picked them 'ere nuts and shipepd 'em to Philydelphia to a commission merchant, but blame my hide if he didn't report each time that the market was overstocked with walnuts and he had to sell my consignment for a song. At any rate, after he took out his commission and other charges there wasn't enough left to pay me for my trouble in shippin' 'em. Under them circumstances I'm not calculatin' pickin' any walnuts this year, for I guess all them commission men are tarred with the same brush, at least I've been told so, and I reckon it's true," said the dealer.

"What do you call a fair price?" asked the farmer.

"That will depend on the market at the time you send the nuts."

"That's jest it. S'pose you report to me that the market is glutted with 'em, where will I come in, then?"

"There's little fear of that. There is a market for all the walnuts you can send in."

"How was it that the Philydelphia market has been overstocked for the past two years?"

The dealer grinned.

"I didn't hear that it was," he said.

"You didn't! And you're in the business? Then I s'pose the commission man done me up. Is that it?"

"I wouldn't like to give any opinion on the subject," replied the dealer evasively.

The farmer looked at him hard.

"You kin give me your card and I'll think the matter over," he said.

"Do so. Send them in and you can be sure I'll do the right thing by you."

When the farmer walked off, Joe followed and caught up with him.

"Can I speak with you a moment?" asked Joe.

"I reckon you kin," said the farmer, stopping.

"I heard you talking to that dealer about the walnuts you grow on your place."

"Well, what about 'em?"

"I thought maybe I could make some arrangement with you to sell them for you."

"Are you a dealer, too?"

"No; I'm a dealer of fruit and vegetables, and

I carry some nuts in the fall. I have a large list of customers, but that has little to do with my plan, for I judge you raise quite a lot of walnuts on your place."

"Quite a lot, eh? I reckon I do. I have the largest walnut-tree grove in the State. I shipped nigh a carload each time to the commission man in Philydelphia, but instead of makin' a good thing out of it, as I expected, I didn't hear nothin' to speak of. It's my opinion I was swindled both times. I guess the chap took me for an easy mark when I shipped him the second load, for he done me up worse than the first time," said the farmer.

"If you have a carload of walnuts, you ought to make a fair profit off them," said Joe.

"I reckon I ought to, too, but what's the use tryin' to buck ag'in them dealers in town? They are all combined to give the farmer as little as possible."

"I was about to suggest taking your walnuts myself and selling them in this city and in Philydelphia off a wagon, thus doing away with the profits of the commission man. My idea is to act as the intermediary——"

"Act as the what?" said the farmer, with a puzzled look.

"The distributing agent between you, the producer, and the public, which is the consumer."

"I see. Your idee is to get the nuts from me and then sell 'em direct to the people at retail."

"That's it."

"Your idec is good if it kin be worked."

"It can be worked if you're willing to ship me the nuts."

"Jest so. Are you responsible? Have you a store or office? I want some evidence that when I ship the nuts I'll get the money for 'em."

"Did the commission merchant pay you when he got the nuts you sent him?"

"No, he didn't; but he was good for the money, even if he did skin me out of most of it."

"When did he pay you?"

"Not for six or seven weeks after he got 'em."

"Well, if I can buy your nuts at a figure I can make a good profit at by selling them a little below the market price, for to get rid of a large quantity myself I'll have to make it an object for people to buy from me, I'll pay you spot cash in advance for the nuts."

"You'll pay me in advance, will you?" said the farmer.

"Yes."

"Now you're talkin'. What might be your name?"

"My name is Joe Graham. What is yours?"

"Amos Fletcher."

"Where's your farm?"

"Six miles out of Cherryville, about sixty miles from here, close to the Susquehanna River."

"Are you near the railroad?"

"Tolerably close to the Philydelphia and Reading."

"When do you gather the nuts?"

"After the frost sets in, but this year I was calculatin' on lettin' 'em lie on the ground, for it's no silly job, I kin tell you, to pick sich a lot of 'em as I have, and then get done out of the money I ought to get for 'em."

"I should like to come up to your place and look the nuts over so as to form some idea of

the quantity. There may be more than I can handle, in which case I would not want to take them all."

"I reckon I could fill a box-car with 'em if I send all I could find. I should be glad to have you come up and look at 'em. You kin stay at my house, and I won't charge you nothin'. Come up in a day or two, and I'll treat you well."

"Are you going right home?"

"This afternoon."

"Then you may look for me on Saturday," said Joe, taking down the farmer's address carefully. They then shook hands and parted.

CHAPTER X.—Joe Makes a Business Deal.

When Joe got home that night and sat down to his supper he told Bridge that he was thinking of going into a speculation in walnuts.

"In what way?" asked his partner.

"On my own hook, independent of the firm." I met a farmer this morning who told me he had a grove of walnut trees on his place that yield enough nuts to fill a box-car. I'm figuring on buying his whole crop."

"How are you going to dispose of them?"

"Sell them off a wagon at a discount from store prices, around Thanksgiving, and from that on till I get rid of them."

"I don't think you could sell so many in this city."

"I don't expect to. I mean to have the bulk of them shipped to Philadelphia and sell them there. The farmer can send me the first lot to this place, enough to put in a week on, and then ship the balance to Philadelphia as I need them. I'll hire a horse and wagon, get a vendor's license there and get busy. I ought to do well, but the arrangement all depends on what the farmer is going to charge me for the nuts delivered on board the cars. I'm going up to his place on Saturday, so you'll have to take the wagon out that day."

"Have you got money enough to handle this deal?"

"Oh, yes; plenty. More than I'll need to use."

Bridge thought that Joe was tackling a pretty big job, but he didn't say so, and the boy soon after went to bed. On Saturday he took a P. & R. train for Cherryville, and was met by the farmer in a carryall at the station.

"I see you mean business, young man," he said. "You look like a smart boy, and I reckon you and me both'll make somethin' off them nuts this year."

"I hope so. How do you ship them?"

"In bushel bags, but if you know any cheaper way, let me know."

"Did you pay the freight when you sent them to the commission man?"

"The commission man paid it, but he charged me with it."

"What did it cost you?"

"I'll let you know when I look over his statement."

The six-mile drive to the farm was a pleasant one, and put Joe in mind of the country around the village where his uncle carried on his general store. After dinner Farmer Fletcher took Joe

out to the walnut tree grove, and there the boy saw nuts, seemingly by the million, on the trees. They were ripe, but it needed a sharp frost or two to loosen them and fetch them down of their own accord. The farmer said that once they began to fall, they lay around so thick that you could shovel them into a cart like dirt.

"When we get them to the yard we separate them from the leaves and twigs and loose earth, measure them in a half-bushel basket, and put them into bags, which, when roughly sewn up, are ready for shipping," he said.

Joe thought there were nuts enough to supply the city of Philadelphia for a long time; at any rate, he was sure there were all he would be able to handle.

"I'll have a small corner in nuts for the time being," he told the farmer.

Later they got down to business and Joe mentioned the figure he was willing to give for the nuts, f. o. b. (deliver on board the car).

"And you'll pay cash down?"

"Yes; in this way: The nuts are to be shipped as I call for them. I will send you \$100 as evidence of good faith and you can trust me for any shipment in excess of that sum. If you have any doubts about me, I'll send you another deposit and I will trust you to return me any balance that you have been overpaid," said Joe.

"I reckon you're a square chap. You send the \$100 and I'll trust you for all over that," said the farmer.

"All right. Draw up a contract, or I will, and we'll sign it. I'll pay you \$25 on account to bind the agreement. How does that suit you?"

"It suits me all right," said the farmer.

A contract was at once drawn up, embodying the price, method of shipping, and terms of payment, and was signed by both of them. On the following day Farmer Fletcher showed Joe around the neighborhood in his carryall, taking him down to the landing on the Schuylkill River to point out that stream to him.

"I see there's a wharf here," said Joe. "I suppose some of the farmers in the vicinity ship fruit and produce to Philadelphia by water."

"We used to use the wharf once on a time to send stuff to Philidelphia, but nowadays we find that it pays better to send stuff by rail. You see, the sloop often got becalmed on the rived and missed the mornin' market. And sometimes a portion of the fruit got too ripe to fetch a first-class price. In the long run it didn't pay nothin' to speak of, even at the low freight charges, so we all gave it up. In them days we had to spend a part of the afternoon carryin' the stuff to the wharf, for the sloop had to get away in time to reach the city around daylight, and it's more'n eighty miles by water, while it's somethin' less than sixty by rail. Nowadays we seldom send to Philadelphia. Reading has grown so we find a good market there and we don't need to go further."

"I wonder if it wouldn't pay me to hire a sloop and come up here after the nuts. I could then make one job of it and save you the trouble of making several shipments by rail as I needed the nuts. I could keep them on board the vessel, and draw on them as I wanted them."

"That's a first-class idee if you kin work it satisfactorily."

"It might not be cheaper in the long run than shipping by rail, but it would be more convenient to me to have all the nuts on hand at once. I might find a good chance to sell half of my cargo at a slap at a fair price."

"You'd better look into it."

"I intend to. You see, I'm in a small retail business at present, and it is my ambition to do things on a large scale. I believe in large sales and small profits, rather than small sales and bigger profits."

"That's where your head is level, young man. There's no doubt but you're a sharp boy, and when you get to be a man you're goin' to make your mark in business," said the farmer.

"I'm going to make my mark in business before I get to be a man," said Joe. "It's born in me to hustle, and I believe in hustling for myself and not somebody else."

"By gum! You've got the right idee."

So when Joe returned to Chester he started to make his investigations, leaving Bridge to go out with the wagon. Already he saw visions of conducting business on a more extensive scale than by confining his efforts to selling fruit and vegetables around the streets. He was a progressive boy. The retail fruit and vegetable business was all right for Bridge, who was a man along in years and whose ambition had never compassed anything very great. A six months' experience in it had served its purpose with Joe by getting him started on a business career, and he now intended to enlarge his horizon of operations.

His meeting with the farmer, who had such a large supply of one thing for sale had started a new train of ideas in the boy's head, and he began to see things in the way he had always dreamed. Chester was on the Delaware, and a tour of the water-front brought results in the shape of a small sloop that was for charter by the week or month, with or without the owner as skipper. Joe got the owner's terms, which were reasonable at that season of the year, when there seemed little prospect of hiring her out.

The boy believed that with the help of Dick, who was familiar with sailing small fore-and-afters, and who had promised to accompany him on his trip, for he had graduated that summer at the high school, and was waiting for a promised opening in the freight department of the Pennsylvania Railroad, he could sail the sloop up the Schuylkill River to the landing near Farmer Fletcher's place and bring her back, loaded with walnuts. So he closed with the owner of the craft, depositing \$100 as security and giving Bridge as his reference. He made all his other arrangements and then awaited word from the farmer that the first frost had come. In a few days the expected word came and he and Dick got ready for their expedition. It was arranged that they were to start next morning early, when, to Joe's intense chagrin, a policeman called at the cottage with a subpoena commanding him to appear as a witness at the trial of the two burglars, three days hence. That put a spoke in his business for the time being, and he was greatly disappointed.

"Never mind," said Dick, "three days' delay won't eat much ice. The nuts will keep. By

the time we get there, all the nuts will be ready for shipment."

"That's all right; but the delay annoys me just the same," replied Joe.

"What can't be cured, old man, must be endured."

"It certainly won't do to disregard the orders of the district attorney's office. I should get into trouble."

"You would, for a fact."

"I'll have to go down and notify the owner of the sloop of the delay."

"I'll do that for you," said Dick, and he started for the water front.

Joe went into the vegetable patch to look after the late stuff that still remained in the ground. Bridge himself was out with the wagon, going the round of the firm's customers. When the old man returned, late that evening, Joe told him that he would go out next day.

"Why, I thought you were going to start on the Schuylkill in the sloop with Dick?" said Bridge, in some surprise.

"I was, but the trip is unavoidably postponed."

"How is that?"

"Got a subpoena this afternoon from the district attorney's office ordering me to attend the trial of those burglars on Thursday."

"That's awkward."

"I should say so. We can't start now till Friday or Saturday."

Next morning Dick came rushing out into the yard where Joe was harnessing the horse, waving the morning paper.

"What's the matter?" Joe asked.

"You'll never guess."

"You'll have to tell me."

"Those two crooks escaped from the city jail last night."

"The dickens they did! Is that a fact?"

"Yes. Here is the story in the paper."

"How did they get away?"

"Cut the bars of their window, let themselves down into the yard and got over the wall."

"How did they get the tools with which to cut the bars?"

"No one seems to know. The work was done by fine, highly tempered saws, such as crooks have used before for the same purpose. The warden believes they had the saws sewn up in their jackets all the time, and their extreme pliability, like whalebones, prevented them from being discovered when they were searched."

"So they got away?"

"Clean off."

"But they'll be recaptured in a day or two."

"Perhaps they will and perhaps they won't. At any rate, they are not likely to be tried on Thursday, so we might as well start on our trip up the river."

"I'll have to call on the district attorney first."

"If you do, he'll tell you not to leave the city, as the police are likely to recapture the prisoners. That will cause an indefinite delay, and mix your business all up. I'd take chances and go. The escape of the crooks is a good excuse for you and your business being pressing is another."

"I'll think it over," said Joe.

At breakfast he told Dick he would go out with the wagon that day, and if the crooks were not

retaken by night they would start up the river in the morning."

The evening papers said that the escaped burglars had not been heard from, and that the police of Philadelphia were on the lookout for them.

"They won't be captured for several days, if they're taken at all," said Dick. "If arrested, a new day will have to be set for their trial. We will be back with the nuts before you'll be called on again to testify in court."

"I guess you're right. We'll make a start tomorrow, then."

"I was down and saw the owner of the sloop. I told him we'd be on hand early in the morning."

Joe nodded, and so the matter was settled.

CHAPTER XI.—In Trouble.

The boys reached the small wharf where the sloop was moored at seven o'clock next morning. They brought a basket of provisions with them, enough, they calculated, to last them on the short trip. At eight o'clock they were under way up the river, and they entered the Schuylkill five miles below the city of Philadelphia. They had a fair wind to waft them along, and they made very good progress.

"This will be a sort of holiday trip for us," said Dick.

"Unless the weather changes," replied Joe, who was no sailor.

"I don't think we need worry about that. The sky is cloudless, and the temperature all that we could wish for. It may grow colder, but not uncomfortably so. Winter won't cast any suggestions for a month yet."

In due time they passed Philadelphia and soon afterwards the river wound to the westward. If the wind held, they expected to reach their destination during the night. They put in at Phoenixville about noon to buy a can of hot coffee for their dinner. Joe went ashore with the can, and while he was away two men, who looked something like farm hands who had allowed their beards to grow for some months, came down to where the boat was tied and entered into conversation with Dick. They inquired how far up the river the boat was going, and then offered Dick a dollar apiece if he would carry them that far.

"You'll have to see my friend about that," said Dick. "He hired the boat for the trip, and I couldn't take you without he agreed to it."

"Where is your friend?"

"He went to a restaurant to get some coffee for our dinner. He'll be back in a few minutes."

So the men waited till Joe returned. Both started and looked a bit uneasy. The boy looked at them sharply and wondered who they were.

"These chaps want us to take them up the river as far as we're going," said Dick. "They are willing to pay \$2 fare."

"Two dollars," said Joe. "Why, you fellows can go by rail for about that."

"We don't care to go by rail. We're used to cruisin' on the water," said one of the men.

Joe wasn't anxious to accommodate the men, even for \$2, for he didn't fancy them much.

"I don't know that I care to take any passengers," he said.

"It will be \$2 in your pocket," said one of the men.

"That makes no difference."

The men walked a few yards away and consulted together. The boys got their basket of food out and proceeded to eat their dinner. The men watched them from the spile they were leaning against. When Joe and Dick had finished their meal, Dick started to hoist their mainsail, while Joe went to the mooring-line and began to cast it off. The men came back and one of them offered Joe \$3 to take them up the river. That aroused Joe's suspicions, and he flatly refused the offer. The sloop began to float out into the river. Suddenly the men leaped together into the cockpit of the boat.

"Be a sport, young feller, and take us along," said one of them, with a grin.

"You seem determined to come, whether we want you or not. Well, I'm not used to being bulldozed into doing what I don't want to do, so I'm going to put back and make you get ashore," said Joe, in a resolute tone.

"Take us as far as Pottstown, anyway. Maybe we can find a boat there that's going on up the river. If we can't, we'll take a train."

The fellow spoke so civilly that Joe, rather against his will, consented to carry them as far as Pottstown which city he expected to reach by three o'clock.

"Give him a dollar, Jim," said the man to his companion.

"Never mind. I won't charge you anything," said Joe.

"We'll make you a present of the dollar, then."

"No, you'd better keep it. You might need it later."

"Where do you want us to stay?"

"You'd better go forward and sit on the deck. You will be in the way here."

"Come on, Jim, we'll go forward."

They sat down near the bow, with their faces toward the boys, and entered into a low conversation. Dick took the helm and headed out into the river, while Joe sat beside him.

"Those chaps had a lot of nerve to jump on board after you told them you wouldn't take them," said Dick.

"That's what they had. Only I didn't want to have a scrap with them I would have made them go back on the wharf."

"I don't like their looks much."

"Neither do I, so I figured that the easiest way was the best to treat them."

"Suppose when we get to Pottstown they won't go on shore?"

"Oh, they'll go. The owner's revolver is in one of the lockers. If they try any game with us at Pottstown I'll get it and make them understand that I'll stand no nonsense."

"Suppose they dared you to use it on them? You know you wouldn't shoot, for that would get us in trouble."

"We'll find men along the waterfront to help us."

"I suppose we can. It's very annoying that these fellows should show up and force their company upon us."

So they sailed along, and were growing reconciled to the presence of their unwelcome passengers.

gers, when suddenly the men got up and came aft to the cockpit.

"Got any idea how far it is to Pottstown?" asked one of the men.

"No. It'll take us more than an hour to get there."

The river was clear of craft at that point, and the shore on either hand was quite a bit away.

"Got any smokin' tobacker about you?" asked the man, looking at Joe.

"No; I don't smoke."

"Got anythin' to drink aboard?"

"No, we haven't."

"Me and my pal have concluded not to leave the boat at Pottstown."

"We're not going to take you any further, so you'll have to leave," said Joe.

"You've decided on that, have you?"

"I have."

"Then we'll have to take charge of the boat. Eh, Jerry?"

"That's what!" said his companion.

The name Jerry, and the tone of the men's voices, which now seemed to have a familiar ring to Joe, raised a dark suspicion in his mind all at once. Were these the two escaped burglars in disguise? He had only seen the crooks by gaslight in the factory office, and they both had smooth faces, covered with a week's growth of stubbly beard. They now looked, except in size, much different from these men, but with his suspicions aroused he began to see a resemblance that he had not noticed before. It began to look as if there was going to be trouble. And there was trouble before the boys were quite prepared for it. The men, with one accord, suddenly grabbed them and forced them down in the cockpit.

"You young fellows are goin' to play second fiddle now," said the man named Jim. "Instead of takin' us up the river, we'll take you up the river. If you don't cave in and stop your strugglin' you may go overboard, and you'll find it a pretty good swim to reach either bank of the river."

Jim held Joe down, while Jerry was perched on Dick's chest. The boys found the men too husky to dislodge, and were obliged to give up the fight. The sloop, with no one at the helm, had fallen off her course, and her boom swung inboard and the canvas shivered as the wind was spilled out of it. The men rolled the boys over and tied their hands behind their backs. Then they carried them into the cabin, closed the door partly on them, and Jim, who appeared to have some skill as a boatman, put the sloop on her course up the river again.

"This is a nice pickle to be in," said Dick.

"We haven't seen the worst of it, I guess," returned Joe. "Who do you suppose those men are?"

"I should imagine they're rough characters."

"They're the two crooks who got away from Chester jail."

"What! How do you know they are? You didn't recognize them on the wharf at Phoenixville."

"I know I didn't, and I only partially recognize them now, but I'm sure they're the men, disguised with false beards and different clothes,

that they probably stole somewhere after they made their escape from the jail."

"If they're the crooks they must have recognized you."

"I can't help it if they have."

"They're liable to put us on shore somewhere and get away with the boat."

"I don't believe they'll put us on shore."

"Why don't you?"

"Because they know as soon as we got free we'd put the police on their track."

"We certainly would."

"They'll carry us with them as long as they stick to the boat, then they'll feel safe. They have taken to the river to throw pursuing officers off their track. They're probably bound for the West."

"Maybe they'll stick to the boat as far as they sail her on the river."

"I would not be surprised if that is their intention."

"The river is 120 miles long."

"I'm glad it isn't longer. That's twice the distance we were going. By the way, Pottsville is on this river, isn't it?"

"Yes. About ninety miles from Philadelphia."

"They may leave the boat there."

"If they go there it will probably take them till to-morrow noon to get to the place if the wind holds fair."

"They'll have to put in somewhere to get something to eat unless they make free with out food. If we could free our hands we would be in a position to give them the slip."

"Not if the chap who remained to watch the boat kept the door closed on us."

"You forget about that revolver in the locker. If I could get my hands on it there'd be something doing."

At that moment Jim came to the door and looked in on them.

"I see you're takin' the sail easy, young fellers," he grinned.

"What are you going to do with the boat?" asked Joe, as a feeler.

"You see what we're doin' with it, don't you," replied the man.

"How far up the river are you going?"

"As far as it suits us to go."

"If we'd known the kind of men you are, I'll bet you would not have got on board at Phoenixville."

"We kind of surprised you, didn't we?" he chuckled.

"Go away and leave us alone. We don't want to talk with you."

"Got any money in your clothes?"

That question gave Joe a shock, for he had \$100 with him to pay the farmer for the walnuts. It was in five \$20 bills, pinned in the inner pocket of his vest, but he did not doubt but the fellow would find it.

"You won't answer, eh?" said Jim. "Then I'll have to search you to find out."

As Dick was nearest to him he went through his trousers and vest pockets and secured about \$3. Then he proceed to search Joe. He found \$12 in small bills. To the boy's intense relief he did not extend his search further. As a matter of fact, Jim did not expect to find much money.

on either of them, not as much as the \$15 he took from both of them, and was quite tickled at getting that sum.

"Thanks, young gents; we'll borrow this from you. One of these days we'll send you our checks, with interest," he grinned.

Then he retired to the cockpit, closing the door. The boat was now passing Pottstown, but, of course, the boys didn't know it. They tried hard to free themselves, but they couldn't get loose, and so the afternoon wore away and evening came on. As Joe had surmised, the men put in for the shore as soon as the shades of night began to fall. They intended to land, and one of them was going to a village they saw not far away to purchase food for themselves. Jim had investigated the packet the boys brought along and concluded to hand some of its contents out to their prisoners. At last they ran the boat alongside of a rural landing and made fast. Then Jim stepped on shore and went off, after telling Jerry to keep his eyes on the boys.

CHAPTER XII—Capture of the Crooks.

"The boat has run in shore and stopped," said Dick.

"I told you they'd land to get something to eat," replied Joe.

"That chap looked into our food-basket. They might have eaten our supper and saved themselves the trouble of landing."

"I guess they left it for us."

"Very kind of them," said Dick, sarcastically.

"Say, I've an idea. Back up against me and see if you can untie the knot that holds my hands."

Dick backed up and applied his fingers to the knot. He met with better luck than he expected. Inside of ten minutes he had loosened the knot so much that Joe got one hand out, and the other easily followed.

"Now there'll be something doing," said Joe.

The first thing he did was to secure the revolver from the locker, then he set Dick free.

"Now, we'll surprise the chap outside before his pal gets back. Bring the cord with you to tie him up. If he puts up a fight I'll shoot him in the leg or arm."

Joe crept to the door and opening it a bit looked out. Jerry was leaning against the rudder-handle, snoring to beat the band.

"He's our meat!" whispered Joe. "Come on."

They crept outside, grabbed the rascal and bound him before he was fully awake.

"We'll carry him into the cabin," said Joe.

When they had him stowed away, Joe said:

"Now we'll lay for the other fellow. Get the boat-hook and hide under the mainsail. I've got the hat of the other chap in the cabin, and his pal will take me for him in the dark till he gets on board. The moment he comes over the side jump up and hit him on the head hard enough to knock him out. Understand?"

Dick said he did, and then concealed himself. In the course of fifteen minutes Jim came along with his arms full of small packages.

"Hello, Jerry," he said, "give me a hand with these."

Joe reached out his arms and received two of the packages. Then Jim stepped on board. Dick, watching his chance, sprang up and hit him with the boat-hook. He went down with a smothered cry. The boys then bound him securely and dragged him into the cabin. Joe lighted the lamp and looked at their prisoners.

"Try and see if those beards will come off," he said.

Dick pulled the false hair off the faces of both men, and then Joe easily identified them as the burglars.

"They're the chaps, all right, and back to jail they'll go as soon as they can be got there," said Joe.

"You'll get a lot of credit for capturing them," said Dick.

"You did as much as I did in the matter. We'll both get the credit of their recapture."

"Our names are sure to be printed in the Chester papers."

"Nothing like becoming famous, after a fashion. Now I must get our money back."

He went through Jim's pockets and found \$14.25. The man had spent 75 cents at a store for food.

"We'll stay here till we've eaten our supper," said Joe. "Our prisoners will have to go hungry till we reach our destination and place them in the hands of the Cherryville officers to hold till the Chester authorities send for them."

At Joe's suggestion, Dick took their jug and went to a farmhouse to purchase a quart of milk. After dispatching their meal they unmoored the sloop and started up the river again.

"Will you recognize the landing we're bound for in the dark?" asked Dick.

"We'll have to keep in close to the shore and make inquiries about Cherryville. The village is seven miles away from the river, but by learning where it is I will get a line on the landing," replied Joe.

The evening was a bright one, with a clear sky, and after awhile the moon came up and gave them plenty of light. They looked in at their prisoners once in a while to make sure they were in no danger of getting loose from their bonds. About nine o'clock they put in at a wharf of a town and Joe went on shore to make inquiries about Cherryville. He found they still had quite a number of miles to go yet before they would reach the neighborhood of the landing. The wind had dropped and they went on but slowly. Hour after hour slipped away and midnight came, but the landing they were bound for was still some distance ahead of them. Joe took another look in the cabin. The man Jim had recovered his senses and learned from his pal how the tables had been turned on them. He made a desperate effort to get loose, but the boys had taken care to tie him and his companion as securely as possible, and all his efforts were futile. He swore like a trooper at Joe when the boy came into the cabin.

"Wait till I get free, and I'll fix you!" he hissed.

"Don't get excited. You won't get free in a hurry," answered Joe.

"What are you going to do with us?" asked Jerry.

"I'm going to turn you over to the police as soon as possible."

"I suppose you'll charge us with stealin' your boat?"

"That's what you did, isn't it?" said Joe, who thought he wouldn't tell them he knew who they really were.

"You can't prove nothin' ag'in us. Our word will be as good as yours in court. Better set us on shore and let us go our way and we won't trouble you no more."

"We can't afford to take the chances of freeing you. You played us a dirty trick, and you'd do it again if you got the chance."

"No we wouldn't. We'll promise to let you al . . ."

"I'll think about it. Anyway, we're not going to put in at the shore much before daylight. By the way, why were you fellows wearing false beards?"

"We're troubled with neuralgia in the jaw, and we have to keep our faces warm," replied Jerry.

"What! Have you both got neuralgia?" said Joe, with a suppressed chuckle.

"Yes, we've got it bad."

"I never knew before that false beards helped neuralgia. Well, you fellows lie quiet now, and when we reach the landing we're bound for I'll let you know how we will dispose of you."

Thus speaking, Joe left the cabin and closed the door. They met with several landings along the river, but none of them resembled the one near Farmer Fletcher's property. Joe felt sure he would be able to recognize it by a certain scarred tree that stood close to it. Daylight was breaking in the east when another landing hove in sight. As they drew close to it Joe saw the dead tree and other indications that this was their destination.

"Here we are," he said. "That's our landing."

"Do you know it?" asked Dick.

"There's the scarred tree I told you about."

"I see it. I guess you've hit it right."

They put in at the landing and made fast.

"Here, take the revolver and keep guard over the prisoners. I'm going over to the farm. Fletcher will be up by the time I get there. I'll have him send his son to the village for the officers to take the crooks in charge," said Joe.

He started off, and when he reached the yard across the stubble fields there stood Farmer Fletcher at the door of his barn. He was greatly surprised to see Joe.

"Why, hello, young man! How did you come?" he asked.

"By boat, as I told you I would."

"But you sent me word that you couldn't come for several days, owing to having to testify in court."

"I know it, but the men I was to appear against made their escape from jail, so the trial had to be put off until they were captured."

"Oh, that's it. You left Chester yesterday, then?"

"Yes, and we got to the landing about half an hour ago. The wind was light during the last part of our trip."

"Well, I'm right glad to see you. Who came with you?"

"My friend, Dick Bridge."

"Why didn't you fetch him over with you? You could have left the boat alone. Nobody around here would touch her."

"He had to stay and watch two prisoners we have on board."

"Prisoners!" ejaculated the farmer. "What do you mean?"

"I mean we've captured the two escaped prisoners."

Joe then told the farmer all about their adventure on the river which led to the capture of the crooks. The farmer was astonished, but he readily agreed to send his son to the village for the constable to carry the men to the lockup there.

"I'll send him after breakfast," he said. "In the meanwhile we'll fetch the chaps up here and keep them in the barn till the officers come for 'em. That will give your friend the chance to breakfast with us."

He called his hired man, had the light wagon put in commission, and all three drove down to the landing. The prisoners were taken out of the cabin.

"What are you goin' to do?" asked Jerry. "Hand us over to the police?"

"That's what'll happen to you."

CHAPTER XIII—Joe's Business Speculations.

The farmer already had fifty bags of nuts ready to ship, and his big cart was soon on its way to the grove to fetch in another load. The two boys and the farmer's son went with it to expedite matters. Joe and Dick remained two days at the farm while the sloop was being loaded. They were treated royally and enjoyed every moment of the time, though they did their share of work in return for the hospitality accorded them. While they were there three detectives came from Chester after the escaped prisoners. They rode over to the farm to get all the particulars from Joe and Dick.

At length the sloop had all the nuts on board she could carry, and bidding adieu to the farmer the boys started back for Philadelphia, where Joe decided to make his first sales.

"You have 400 bushels of nuts," said Dick. "How long do you expect it will take you to sell them at retail?"

"I am not sure now that I will follow my original plan of peddling them about the street," replied Joe. "Taking into consideration my time, board and lodging in the city, and the rent of the horse and wagon, I think I can make as much by selling them at wholesale in large lots if the market price is good. I'm getting tired of doing things in a small way. There's really only a living and little over in that. The bigger the scale you do business on the more there's in it, luck being equal."

That practically expressed Joe's enlarged sentiments. He visited a number of commission houses to see what they figured the nuts would bring, delivered at their door. He got the market price and then paid a visit to wholesale grocery houses that supplied nuts to their trade and got their supplies from the commission men. He drove a fair bargain with each house he visited,

and sold 350 bushels of the nuts, agreeing to deliver them, terms cash. He returned to the sloop late in the day and told Dick of his success.

"I'll make just about 100 per cent. on my speculation," he said. "I bought the nuts for 75 cents a bushel, plus the cost of the bags, which is not much. I've sold 350 bushels for \$1.50, delivered. I paid Farmer Fletcher \$125 on account, and he's trusted me for the balance, something less than \$200. At this stage of the game I'm about \$200 ahead, with 50 bushels left to dispose of in Chester at retail. I should clear \$2 a bushel off them. That will make my profits altogether \$300."

Joe was now worth something over \$600, besides his half interest in the fruit and vegetable business, which he decided to dispose of to somebody acceptable to Bridge. So he advertised and secured a young man to take his interest for \$150.

About two weeks before Christmas Joe was attracted by an advertisement of a book and stationery store for sale cheap on account of the owner's death. He called at the place and found it was on a side street, where trade was but moderate. He found that the stock was to be sold at a sacrifice. Not being up in the business he couldn't tell whether that was true or not, though he presumed it was from the circumstances of the case. He told the woman he'd think it over if she would give him an option on the place for 24 hours for \$5. She consented, and then Joe called at a big book and stationery store and arranged with one of the clerks for a consideration to go around to the store and size the stock up. The clerk, after a careful inspection, told him that the price was a bargain, but that the location of the store was not good for a profitable business.

Joe bought the stock and fixtures for cash, and as the rent had been paid for a week ahead he closed the place up and went in search of a store on one of the principal retail streets. He found one and agreed to occupy it till the first of the year if he got the use of it at a substantial reduction, the sign to remain up. The agent let him have it on those terms, and he immediately ordered a big sign painted, as follows: "Bankrupt sale of books and stationery for the holidays only. Everything going at bed-rock prices. Fixtures for sale."

Then he advertised for a salesman familiar with books and stationery. He got a dozen answers to his advertisement. He sent for one and had a long talk with him. Then he moved his stock and fixtures around to the new store and put up his sign. Next day he opened up, acting as his own cashier. He didn't sell at bed-rock prices by any means, but he sold some things cheap to attract attention. Finding he had a rush of customers, he sent for a second salesman, and finally a third one. His stock went off fast at a good profit. He cleared a little over \$250 on this speculation, and was now worth \$1,000.

A week later Joe got acquainted with a bright fellow named Smith. They soon got quite friendly, and Smith told him in confidence that if he had some money he could double it several times over.

"How could you?" asked Joe, looking interested.

"I'm working for a man in the cheap clock and notion business. Some time ago he imported a thousand Swiss alarm clocks, but when they arrived he was short of funds to pay the duty."

"Well?"

"They will easily retail in this country for \$5 and \$6 each. They are pretty clocks and the few samples we had went off like hot cakes, that's why my boss went into the speculation. The clocks cost him about \$2 and the freight charges. The duty is 50 cents on each clock, so the government is holding them in bond till the duty is paid."

"Maybe I can find a purchaser for your boss," said Joe.

"If you can he'll pay you \$50."

"Where is his place of business, and what's his name?"

"Here's his card," said Smith.

Next day he went around among the clock trade and inquired about the Swiss cuckoo alarm clock. He found that nearly every wholesale house had some for sale, the trade price of which was \$3.75 to \$4, and they were sold at retail from \$6 to \$8, according to the reputation of the store. In the afternoon Joe went to Philadelphia on the same errand and learned the same facts. That evening Joe visited the astrologer and had a talk with him. If Etioles thought well of the speculation he was going to ask him for the loan of \$2,000. The Egyptian listened to him attentively then looked up his list of lucky days for that month. Then he consulted a list for days best suited to make speculative ventures. After that he cast a horoscope of Joe for that year, with particular reference to the first three months. As soon as he had finished, he said:

"I'll lend you the money, but you must make the deal on this day, in the forenoon, around eleven o'clock. Then you must hire your store on any one of these days, and open up on one of them. If you carry this out you will make a success of your speculation."

"I'll do exactly as you say," replied Joe.

"Come here in the morning and you shall have the money. Come at nine o'clock."

Joe promised and went home. Two days later he bought the consignment of Swiss clocks in Bridge's name and received a commission of \$50.

CHAPTER XIV—Conclusion.

On his way to Philadelphia Joe got an idea that put his store plan in the shade, though he could not tell whether he could work it. At any rate, he determined to see what he could do about it. As soon as he reached the city he called at the biggest department store and asked for an interview with the manager. He was admitted to that gentleman's office.

"I have bought 1,000 imported Swiss cuckoo clocks, of a grade that retail between \$6 and \$8 apiece," he began. "I would like to make an arrangement with this house by which I could secure a space in the proper department to sell these clocks at a bargain, say at \$4.40 each, the

house to advertise the clock and furnish sales-girls, and retain 49 cents on each clock sold. The sale to run for a stipulated time, at the end of which I will remove all clocks remaining unsold."

The interview was brief, at the end of which he was told to bring a sample clock next morning at nine o'clock and the proposition would be taken up by the buyer of the clock department. Joe then went to the warehouse where goods were held in bond, paid the duty on the consignment and the storage charges up to the end of the month. He got permission to have a man open one of the cases so he could take out one of the clocks. The clock proved to be exactly as represented, and he went away with it. He reached Chester about two o'clock and took the clock out to show the astrologer and Amina. He told Etio-cles about the new plan he had conceived, and the Egyptian thought well of it. Next morning he went up to Philadelphia again and called at the department store. He saw the buyer of the clock department, and exhibited his sample. After some talk they went to the manager's office and there the matter was gone over again, and it was finally decided to take up with Joe's offer, and the contract was made, the clocks to be put on sale Monday morning at \$4.49. At the buyer's suggestion Joe sent 300 clocks to the store. A feature advertisement, with a drawing of the clock, appeared in the store's Sunday advertisement. There was an unusual rush of customers to the clock department that week, and the 300 clocks were depleted so fast that Joe sent 300 more. They went so well, 500 being disposed of, that the sale was continued during the following week. Eight hundred of the clocks were sold altogether, for which Joe received \$3,200. That left him a profit on his speculation of \$1,100, and he still had 200 of the clocks left, the wholesale value of which was \$800 more. He went to New York and sold them to two department stores for \$3.50 each. Thus he made \$1,800 on the deal, which made him worth \$2,800. With this money he bought a grocery store in Chester in a good location, and after running it for a month disposed of it at a profit of \$700.

During the next two or three weeks he did nothing, then he saw the announcement in the paper that the furniture and works of art of a well-known woman in New York were going to be sold at auction. The day before the sale he went to New York and looked the articles over in the company of dealers and interested outsiders. Next day he attended the sale. He succeeded in getting hold of works of art that had cost about \$10,000 for \$3,000. Then, provided with a letter of introduction from the astrologer, he went around among the rich people of the city and told them that he would have on exhibition at a certain place certain art objects which would be for sale at a fair price. He fitted the room up in a swell way on borrowed furnishings, and placed his art objects about, with the price of each attached to it. He had a great many callers, and he sold about half of his stock. He then advertised a public auction of the remainder. He reaped a profit of \$2,500 out of this venture over and above all of his expenses. Thus within one year of the time he left his uncle, Silas Green, he had made \$6,000 in profitable business ventures.

During all that time he had not heard a word from Mr. Green. He thought he would write to the old man and let him know how fortunate he had been. Five days later he got a reply from his uncle. The old man said he was delighted to hear of his nephew's success. Joe was his only relative, and he had always liked him, he said. He was getting old and didn't expect to live much longer, so he hoped Joe would come back and see him, if only for a day or two. So he wrote a reply and told his uncle he would visit him in a few days. At the end of a week he started by train for the nearest station to the village of Dexter. When he left the train he found a conveyance which would carry him to the village. It was nearly dark when he reached Dexter, every tree and house of which was familiar to him.

He went to the village inn and registered.

"I'm going down the street to call on my uncle," he told the landlord after supper. "I'll be back before you close up."

He found the housekeeper in the kitchen sitting by the fire waiting for Mr. Green to come to supper. She was surprised to see Joe, looking like a banker's son, walk in.

"Where's my uncle?" asked Joe.

"In the store," she replied.

"Then I don't understand why the front door is locked," he said.

Before the housekeeper could answer, he started for the passage leading into the store. Entering through the back door he was startled to see his uncle tied to a chair and gagged with a towel. The noise he made brought into view two hard-looking men, whom he recognized as the tramps that had tried to steal his wagon in Chester. They had been trying to open a very ordinary safe under the counter, in which the old man kept his money. The situation was plain to the boy, and picking up a large box of sardines he flung it at one of the men. It caught him on the temple and knocked him senseless. Snatching up an axe-handle, Joe started for the other. The fellow rushed for the door, but Joe floored him with a blow and bound him with a piece of hay rope. He then released his uncle. The old man was delighted to see his nephew, especially at such an opportune moment. The constable was sent for and the two rascals were taken to the lockup.

Joe spent the evening at the store, and the old man showed him his will in which the boy was made his heir, which he was, anyway, by law. He remained two days in the village, and then returned to Chester, where he soon found the chance to go into the fruit and vegetable business down near the market, and he made big money from the start. He continued to visit the astrologer and Amina regularly, and one day he asked Etio-cles for his ward's hand and got it. They were married shortly afterward, and they took up their home with the Egyptian, who had purchased the place and intended to leave it to Amina.

Thus we close story of a sharp boy.

Next week's issue will contain "TOM SWIFT OF WALL STREET, or, THE BOY WHO WAS ON THE JOB."

CURRENT NEWS

ROUGH BOY WON'T SLIDE.

A mother's letter complaining that her young son had worn out three pairs of pants in three months on public school chairs in Boston was answered by Chairman Joseph P. Lomasney of the School House Commission that \$44,100 had been spent this year to keep chairs and desks smooth.

He said this boy's chair had been specially sand-papered at the request of his father, who said the youngster was hard on pants. All things considered, the chairman said, the boys and not the chairs must be held responsible.

WOMAN STAYED AT HOME FOR YEARS.

Miss Fannie M. Read of Hancock, N. Y., left her home for the first time in fifty-nine years to attend the funeral of her brother, E. Darwin Read, who was eighty-two years of age when he died, after being a voluntary recluse ever since the beginning of the Civil War. Although an aged woman, Miss Read is still vigorous and in good health. She is said to have made a vow in 1861 that she would never leave her room after her father broke off her engagement to a National Guard officer. She kept the vow.

POLAND'S LONGEST PIPE LINE.

The longest pipe line in Poland for the transmission of oil was opened on September 4, 1920. This duct, which runs from Jaslo to Gorlitz, is constructed of 10-inch piping and is 28 kilometers (17.38 miles) in length. It is connected with another line that runs from Jaslo to Mezinek. Both these lines were constructed by the Polish Government and are used for the transmission of oil from the wells in Mezinek to numerous refineries and factories. Since the construction of the new pipe line a sufficient number of factories have begun to use oil as fuel instead of coal to result in the saving of 6,000 carloads of coal per year.

PRESIDENT WILSON WINS 1920 NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

Announcement is made that the Nobel peace prize will be conferred on President Wilson of United States on December 10.

The Nobel peace prize carries with it a grant of about \$40,000, which is one-fifth of the annual interest on about \$9,000,000 left for that purpose by Alfred B. Nobel, the Swedish scientist and the inventor of dynamite, who died in 1896. The only two Americans who have in the past received the Nobel peace prize were Theodore Roosevelt, in 1906 and Elihu Root in 1912.

NEW JAPANESE STAMPS INTEREST COLLECTORS.

The Japanese Government has put out a remarkable issue of postage stamps in connection with the national census, which began Oct. 1. Of course the new stamps will be sought eagerly by philatelists, for they commemorate an event which took place more than 1,000 years ago—a period which, after all, is not so very long in ancient

Nippon's history, this being the 2,550th of the accepted Japanese era.

The previous census in Japan was taken nearly 1,200 years ago in the era of Empress Kotoku. The design of the stamps represents a provincial governor of the period inspecting the census returns for his province. In the upper left-hand part of the design appears the Imperial emblem of the chrysanthemum. Narrow panels extend on each either side of the stamp contain rows of syllabic characters signifying "Imperial Japanese Post" on the left and "In commemoration of the first census, ninth year of Tai-sho," on the right.

The stamps, which have been surface-printed by the Government Engraving Bureau at Tokyo, are of two denominations, 1 1-2 sen (sen equals one cent in U. S. money) purple and 3 sen scarlet. They are available only for domestic postage and special letters to China until April 1, 1921.

WOMAN EDUCATES SPIDER

Educating a spider is a task rarely undertaken. Mrs. Elizabeth Marriott Moffatt, of Wheaton, Ill., one of the few students of spiders in the country, however, set herself to it, and this is what she writes of her experience:

"By far the most common spider in this country is the one known as the 'black-and-brown speckled garden spider,' *Argelena naevia*," said Mrs. Moffatt. "The species, although called the garden spider, is often found in our houses, where it builds a flat sheet web in some corner, always having a funnel at the rear, into which the spider can escape when disturbed. The body is from one-half to three-quarters of an inch in length. At the back end two of the spinnerets project, looking like little pointed tails.

"A fully grown specimen was captured and put in a wide-mouthed half-ounce bottle. This was laid on its side on the library table. Every day she was given a small drop of water and one or several house flies. The flies were fed to her by placing one in a bottle similar to that in which the spider was caged, placing a card over the mouth of the bottle that contained the fly, withdrawing the cork from the spider's bottle, placing the two bottles mouth to mouth, and then removing the card.

"At once the spider would rush into the second bottle, seize the fly and return with it to her own bottle. She soon learned to run to the mouth of her bottle whenever I approached her with water or a fly.

"After a few days the cork was taken out of her bottle so that she could come and go at will. She would wander about the table, crawling over and around books and papers, but always retreating to her bottle when frightened. She had built a small web in it, with a crude retreat at the farther end and had adopted it as her home.

"She learned so readily to come for food and water that I am led to wonder whether Febré's contention that every act that a spider performs is 'impelled by an instinct that has come down to it through untold generations,' is not subject to some modification."

Lost On Mt. Erebus

—OR—

A Boy Explorer At the South Pole

By GASTON GARNE

(A Serial Story)

CHAPTER XXIII (Continued)

"Batty! Not much. You have nearly made yourself batty, by slipping pieces of your ration in my bag. Don't say no. I can feel one there now. Oh, me! How could I have let you do me that way."

Hawley still said no, but hung his head guiltily. Carr and Joy looked mystified. The girl, still with her arm about him, explained.

"When we start out after our sleep, you know we put our next ration in our pouches, so as not to unpack the ration bag until the following morning. Twice feeling in my pouch I was surprised to find more pemmican, or an extra half biscuit, than there should be. But I concluded that I was mistaken. That was because I was so—so hungry. And here I've been eating part of poor Joe's ration unknowing. No wonder his head grows heavy."

"Aw! cut that out, Madge. You need more to keep up on than us men."

"I won't cut it out. I'm confessing. I'm as bad as Rucker or Shouse, only I did not know I was at the time."

But the doctor and Joy seemed to think it a good joke on Madge, and bade her hush up. The fact was that all were enthused over the idea of being so near to their next cache. Provisions would then be plentiful.

Moreover, they could hardly sleep for thinking of the nearness of that heaven-sent supply of food, though it reminded them of the sad fate of White and his companions, who had unwittingly saved their lives.

When they did start it occurred to all that nothing had been seen of Rucker or Shouse since their disappearance the day before.

"It is odd," said Joe. "But we are so near the Owl's Head now we will go there first and look them up later, when our stomachs are full."

"That night it came on to blow almost another blizzard. But the wind was at their backs in the morning, and they pushed on, stubbornly determined to reach the cache if possible.

Joy fell into a crevasse in the afternoon, and it took half an hour to rescue him. Tired, gaunt, hungry, they then plodded on until at last Hawley mounted a nearby ice cap in order to obtain a clearer look. All at once he called out:

"I think I see the Owl's Head. Come here, Madge, and confirm my judgment, if you can."

Madge came and after a long look through the telescope nodded affirmatively; but, looking down at a point nearer, she exclaimed:

"I see moving objects—or—is it my eye? Look, Joe!"

Hawley took the glasses, which were unusually good ones, and after looking himself suddenly compressed his lips.

"I guess you are mistaken, Madge," he said, shutting them up in their case. "But we certainly do see the Owl's Head. Hurray for that! Let's get back to the sled and push on. Supper's near, men!"

The boy was shouting at Carr and Joy tugging at the sled. But when he reached them and relieved the doctor, he whispered:

"I want one of you to go with me for half an hour. The other and Madge can make the Owl's Head—it's there—we saw it—but I saw something else. I don't want her to know it—hush!"

The girl came up, only half satisfied, but at once took the boatswain's place when Hawley boldly asked Joy to go with him and make certain as to what Madge thought she saw.

"If you are too tired, leave the sled," called Joe. "We'll come back after it—see?"

But Carr and the girl drew it on, grumbling somewhat over Joe's "sudden freaky ways," as Madge dubbed them.

"Is your shooting-iron all right, Joy?" asked Joe when the two were alone together and trudging rapidly toward where Madge declared she saw moving objects.

"Bet your life, sir. What is it—bears—or wolves—or—"

"I think it's Rucker and Shouse. They must have gone without food for two days. We ought to be ready for anything."

CHAPTER XXIV

CONCLUSION

The boatswain looked at his companion anxiously. A horrible fear dawned on his comprehension.

"You don't mean——" he began, but Hawley stopped him, saying:

"Reserve your opinion until we both are certain."

"Well, but what in the nation did you see?"

"First the girl saw moving objects under yonder rock bluff. It is not more than two miles from there to our cache.

"I caught the glasses, which are strong ones, from her, for I knew that there are no wild animals so far in from the coast. None at least have so far been found. Just as I focused the glass, I clearly saw a human figure lying down. Another was rising, and it looked, as he bent over the first, that the second one held a weapon—club or something."

"Good heavens!" Joy was more horrified than ever. "It must be them, and they've had no food for two days, and were already so starved that they stole our grub."

"I may be in error, Joy. Let us hurry, hurry, and stop it if we are not too late. Think of it! Within two miles of the cache, and, perhaps, about to commit murder—for——"

Both were running, notwithstanding their weakness. Joy topped an intervening snow rise a trifle first. Hawley, perhaps two yards behind, saw the boatswain wave his arms and shout:

"Stop, man, stop! We're all right now! Stop, I tell you——"

(To Be Continued)

GOOD READING

ALLIGATOR STARTLES AUDIENCE.

A seven-foot alligator escaped from its cage during an act at Poll's theater, Waterbury, Conn., and crawled over the edge of the stage, toppling into the orchestra pit and causing a mild panic. The alligator was on its way up the center aisle when it was bagged by Benjamin Brady, an ex-circus man, who happened to be in the audience.

DUCK RELEASED IN NEW YORK SHOT IN ALBERTA, CAN.

Carl Jensen of Camrose, Alta., recently shot a pintail duck whose leg was encircled by a metal band on which was engraved: "Released by the American Museum at New York. Will finder please notify us." The distance between New York and Camrose is 2,500 miles.

Jensen owns a farm in the newly settled area along the Canadian National Railways which is a nesting ground for wild geese and many varieties of ducks. These fowl had already begun their migration southward when the pintail was killed. How far this particular duck had been north is not known. The summer habitat of the pintail extends as far as the Arctic Ocean.

But the direction of this duck's flight from New York, it is pointed out, is scientifically interesting. In their spring migrations, aquatic fowl, it has been thought, fly straight north.

If the pintail had lived up to this tradition it would have gone from New York into the highlands of Labrador. The fact that it winged its way westward half across the continent has upset existing theories and may lead to new discoveries regarding the migratory habits of wild fowl.

ARCHITECTURAL WONDER IN JUNGLES OF JAVA.

In central Java there stands a temple built in the sixth century of the Christian era, which is in almost as perfect a state of preservation as when the workmen and artists laboring upon it laid down their tools. The temple is one of the architectural wonders of the world. Yet, strangely enough, almost nothing has been written of it—that is, except great scientific volumes, mostly in Dutch, which do not come into the hands of the average reader.

Words fail adequately to tell of this remarkable building. It was reared by Buddhist missionaries and their followers to hold a vase of ashes of Buddha. The ashes of Buddha, according to the history of the times, were divided first into eight parts and placed in tombs in certain cities in India. Later King Osaka of India, the most jealous apostle of Buddhism in the annals of that religion, had the ashes re-divided into 84,000 parts, which were placed in separate vases and taken by different missionaries. Some of these men went to Java and soon the country adopted their religion.

As a fitting monument in which to place the vase of ashes the temple of Boro-Budur was erected. It is particularly interesting at this time, as there is a possibility that in the near future aeroplanes will carry tourists to it; for just re-

cently a syndicate of Dutch capitalists announced the starting of an aeroplane service throughout the Malay archipelago and Java, with its great population and trade connections, will be one of the most important islands on the route.

The temple of Boro-Budur is 150 feet high and stands on an artificial plain incased with huge lava blocks. It is made up of terraces, the galleries of which are filled with bas-reliefs. In the corner of each of the galleries, which are many-angled, sits a Buddha on his lotus leaf.

Through the parapet of the artificial plain on which the temple stands are steps which are guarded by grotesque animals of stone. On the upper flat are seventy-two bell-shaped shrines. These are of latticework stone, and within every one of them is a Buddha seated gazing toward the vast central dome. This dome is fifty-two feet in diameter, and at one time had an immense topping spire.

Following the Moslem invasion in the fifteenth century A. D. the temple was deserted and surrounded with a jungle. It remained unknown to the world until 1814, when it was stumbled upon by Sir Stamford Raffles, then Lieutenant Governor of the island. He at once realized the historic value of the wonderful temple, and put hundreds of men to work to reclaim Boro-Budur from the jungle. The undertaking was continued by the Dutch when they took over the island.

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HARRY E. WOLFE, Pub., 166 W. 23d St., N. Y.

THE NEWS IN SHORT ARTICLES.

"SHOVED QUEER" ON COURT.

A peddler, name unknown, who was fined \$2 for violation of the license provisions by Magistrate McQuade in Essex Market Court, New York, the other day, paid the fine and cleared \$7 on the deal. He tendered a counterfeit, or raised, \$10 note in payment of the fine and the clerk accepted it and handed him \$8 change.

There were thirty push-cart peddlers in the court on similar charges and each was fined \$2. Later, in getting the receipts ready for deposit, Chief Clerk Isaac Rice discovered that a one-dollar bill had been raised by the pasting of the numerals "\$10" over the figures "1" engraved on the bill. The police are looking for the peddler.

SITS AMONG SNAKES

Dr. Marie Phisalix is making a thorough study of poisonous reptiles and the practical uses to which they can be put. She spends her time in the serpents' house of the famous Zoo, the Jardin de Pantes, where she sits in her laboratory with her snakes, salamanders, singing toads and grass-green tree frogs about her.

"Here," she said, taking up a lovely newt with the resplendent orange waistcoat which Nature gives him for courting times, "here is a gentleman whose poison is not in a gland provided with a fang but under his skin," and she explained that this device, if it left him defenseless before his enemy the snake, yet defended his race, since no snake could eat two newts. He dies from the effects of the first.

Mme. Phisalix is the only woman engaged in research work at the Paris Natural History Museum, and she holds a unique position in the scientific world. She took her degree at Sevres Women's College and was a professor of natural science in different lycees, which she obtained in 1900 with a thesis on the salamander and poisons from the medical point of view.

MARVELOUS MEMORIES OF WELL-KNOWN MEN

One of the most remarkable "men of memory" is George Herkottle, a quarry miner living near Newcastle, England. This "son of the soil" possesses a memory which retains an indelible impression of every word which he hears or reads. After once reading a dozen pages of any book he can repeat them without emitting a single word. One morning this remarkable man purchased a volume of this "Fairie Queene," and before the evening he could recite Spencer's masterpiece from beginning to end.

Viscount Milner, a member of the War Cabinet, is the possessor of a wonderful memory. He once performed an astonishing feat while private secretary to Lord Goshen. He was asked to supply a copy of his chief's address to the electors of East Edinburgh, and failing to find the address, he wrote out the address from memory with such remarkable accuracy that on comparing it with the original it was found to contain only one trifling mistake.

Gladstone had a wonderful memory, and could "reel off" passages from Homer, Ovid and the "Iliad" at a moment's notice.

The greatest master of memory, however, was Lord Macaulay. From a very early age the retentiveness of his memory was extraordinary. When only three or four years of age his mind mechanically retained the form of what he read or heard. Once, as a child, when making an afternoon call with his father, he picked up Scott's "Lay of the Last Minstrel" for the first time, and quietly read it while his elders were engaged in conversation. When they returned home, Macaulay amazed his parents by reciting the whole of the poem without a mistake.

METHUSELAH OF TREES.

If there is any tree in New York state that deserves an honorable mention all its own, it is the splendid old wreck of an elm at Avon, N. Y., known as the Markham Elm.

The owner of the tree, W. G. Markham, is a member of the Forestry Association, and has entered the tree in the association's big tree contest, not with the idea of its carrying off the prize, but in much the same spirit in which old and battle-scarred warriors were brought forward as witnesses to the tourney in which they once excelled.

The Markham Elm reached the zenith of its glory 100 years ago, at which time it measured forty-five feet in circumference. Gradually the center of its trunk became so decayed as to be but a shell, and in 1888 there were openings on the east and west sides of the tree so large that a span of horses could be driven through. In that year the north side was blown over. This was sawed across and 375 annual rings were counted. Estimating the distance to the center, the tree must have been considerably more than 600.

At the present time a portion of the south side of the trunk, about five feet wide and from one to three feet thick, though much decayed on one side, is supporting a top which, from the distance, shows quite a tree, although it is in reality but a single limb branching out from the trunk.

An historical sketch on the Markham Elm appeared in the Rochester "Democrat and Chronicle" in 1914. After presenting authentic records in proof of the tree's history, including the records of four generations of the family on whose homestead the elm has stood, the writer summed up with the following interesting comment: "The record places the maximum age of the American elm far above the common estimate. This tree was old when the Pilgrim fathers founded the Plymouth colony, in 1620. It was in adult age when Columbus landed, in 1492.

"It was 600 years old on June 24, 1914, recalling the date on which the Scottish army, under Robert Bruce, crushed the English army, under Edward II., on the field of Bannockburn. About this time the Markham Elm began its life history."

INTERESTING NEWS ARTICLES

SEA MUSSELS ARE GOOD.

In a recent bulletin the Bureau of Fisheries declares that sea mussels are in a high degree both palatable and nutritious. The bureau goes further, and says that in view of the abundance of the mussels and the ease with which they can be obtained, the neglect of them for table use is wasteful. It points out that sea mussels are found along the coasts of nearly all the northern half of the Northern Hemisphere, and that there are beds on the New England coast so extensive that the mussels could be collected daily by the ton. It adds that many persons consider the flavor of the mussel superior to that of the oyster; that, moreover, mussels are in season when the oyster is out of season, and that they are more easily cultivated than the oyster. It admits that fresh mussels are difficult to market, for they spoil if kept more than twenty-four hours, but asserts that if canned or pickled they retain their natural flavor for months. The bureau recommends that such cheap and nutritious food be placed on the market.

A CAT'S WHISKERS

Why does a cat have whiskers? asks the Popular Science Monthly. This question comes under the larger one—what is the function of eye appendages? Mr. P. F. Swindle has investigated this subject very thoroughly, and he has formed some startling conclusions, which he reports in the American Journal of Psychology.

Your First Reader told you, in simple words and large type, that pussy's whiskers, wide as his body, were there to warn him of the sized hole he could crawl through, but that reason did not suit psychologists, and they have recently proved that whiskers aid the cat's eye.

Most animals have eye appendages that seem to obstruct their vision. And many of those that haven't any use substitutes—the snake, for instance, continually thrusts out its tongue. But, according to Mr. Swindle's investigations, these obstructing appendages really aid the eye. When an animal watches its prey or stares at a branch that it intend to land on it wiggles its whiskers constantly and thereby rests its eyes. Thus, instead of becoming blurred in time, the object it watches is always sharply defined.

Mr. Swindle experimented with a tomcat, watching him first with his whiskers on, and then watching him after the whiskers had been shaved off. Tommy soon changed from a fat, well fed cat to a thin, hungry one.

THE MEDITERRANEAN IS WITHOUT TIDES

The Mediterranean Sea, which is now a center point of interest, is commonly described as tideless, and the description is correct, at any rate at its eastern end. Navigators like Jonah

and St. Paul knew nothing of tides. The word does not even occur in the Bible.

It was no doubt the amazement felt by ancient Greek mariners, accustomed to the even level of the tideless sea, at the sight of the tidal bore of the Seine at Rouen.

Science has discovered an explanation of the tides in the influence of the sun and moon. These, operating in the ratio of one to four, produce spring tides when pulling together and neaps when when in opposition.

The tidal contrast at Southend and the mightiest effort of the Bristol Channel at Chepstow, in England, are alike dwarfed by the eccentricities of the Bay of Fundy, that cul de sac between Nova Scotia and New Brunswick into which the Atlantic rushes with pent-up fury, giving rise to such effects as the bore at Moncton, the Reversible Falls at St. John and the lightning transformation of Windsor from a swamp to a deep-water harbor in the course of a few minutes. As, however, it is a harbor for only four hours and a swamp for twenty, the utility of Windsor is qualified.

Remarkable as are these expressions of the ocean to eyes unaccustomed to such freaks, it must be confessed that the tourist is certain to encounter disappointment if he expects too much. Thus the tides of the Bay of Fundy are absolutely unnoticeable on the steamers which cross from Digby to St. John.

The reversible falls at the latter port, seen immediately after high water from the suspension bridge overhead, are just worth the short drive from the city, but the much-advertised Moncton bore is a poor thing in the light of day, although, heard rather than seen at night the coming of the wave over the mud flats inspires an agreeable feeling of fear in those gathered on the little quay for the purpose. Its only rival is said to be in China, but from all accounts the Chinese bore is a far more formidable flood.

It is in virtually landlocked seas like the Baltic, Mediterranean and Euxine that one must look for absence of tides, explains the Washington Star, particularly in those portions remote from their outlet. At Stettin, Germany, Smyrna and Batoum there is no tide whatever. Even at Cannes the ebb is so feeble that a strong wind from the sea all but arrests it. This regular ebb and flow of tides must not be confused with the operation of currents, which from the Gulf Stream, the most considerable of them all, to the slightest drift on our coasts are due to very different influences.

Even from the Mediterranean and Black Seas very strong currents emanate. The currents off Gibraltar are by no means disregarded by sailors, and the pace of the Bosporus, opposite Constantinople or Bebek, suggests a mill race and calls for the greatest caution in navigating boats.

Those who live on the shores of the Baltic and Mediterranean have taken advantage of the absence of tides to erect all manner of fixed bathing places, thereby dispensing with the cumbersome and comfortless bathing machine which is moved to and fro on the foreshore.

FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

NEW YORK, JANUARY 7, 1921.

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ITEMS OF INTEREST

PICKPOCKETS GET \$25,000 IN JEWELRY.

William Seibel, of New York, importers of precious stones, Maiden lane, reported to the police of Philadelphia that pickpockets had robbed him of \$25,000 in diamonds which he carried in a leather case in his inside coat pocket. Seibel visited a manufacturing jewelry plant here, where he displayed his stock and placed the case back in his inside pocket.

He then went to Camden to call upon a jeweler and discovered the loss of the jewels, he said, when he alighted from a trolley car.

BEAT FORD TIME CLOCKS.

Said to have cashed employees' checks simultaneously under five or six different names, Mack Ilczuk, no address, was arrested recently on complaint of the Ford Motor Company.

Since December, 1917, Ilczuk has fraudulently obtained between \$6,000 and \$7,000, it was charged. Ilczuk, according to the complaint, spent his time walking from department to department punching every clock that came within range and making the rounds on pay day, where he collected a week's salary in each department.

Ilczuk was never registered as working in less than two departments simultaneously and sometimes he was punching clocks in four different departments, according to Ford officials.

BOY KILLED WHILE HUNTING.

Robert Germond, fifteen, son of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Germond of Mount Holly, N. J., died in the Burlington County Hospital with a bullet in his brain.

He and Herbert Milligan, also fifteen, had gone to the farm of Joseph Goldy on bicycles to visit the two Goldy boys, Thomas and Leander. Young Germond and the Milligan boy had brought rifles along. While Robert was looking into the barrel of his chum's rifle the weapon was accidentally discharged, the bullet penetrating his forehead.

His three companions carried him to the farmhouse, whence he was taken to the hospital, where he died three hours later.

The Germonds moved to Mount Holly from Poughkeepsie, N. Y., a year ago. The boy was a member of the High School Orchestra.

TAKE 16 PIES AND 3 CAKES ON TRIP TO SAN FRANCISCO.

Sixteen apple pies and three chocolate layer cakes was the only provender two small boys from Clifton, N. J., took with them when they started for San Francisco "and the wild and movie west." William Coughlin, chief of police of Clifton, received that information over the long distance wire from Sugartown, Penn., where the boys appeared from the inside of a freight car.

The boys gave their names to the Sugartown police as Joseph Nosel, thirteen, of 94 Lakewood avenue, Clifton, and Virgil De Maria, twelve, of 102 Lake avenue, Clifton. They said that, after waiting for weeks, the desire to see the world overcame their natural sense of prudence and they went down to the Lackawanna Railroad yards in search of transportation. They picked out one newly painted car which they instinctively knew was bound for 'Frisco,' climbed in with their sixteen pies and three cakes, and shut the door.

LAUGHS

"My rich uncle is dead." "He left you something, did he not?" "Yes." "Good! What did he leave you?" "Penniless."

"Cholly fought a duel lately with wax bullets." "Oh, dear me! I hope none of them struck him in the head."

"Is he a great artist?" "No." "But he gets good prices for his stuff." "Yes. He's a great salesman."

She (on the parlor sofa, in a very low tone)—Sh! What's that? He (also in a low tone)—What? She—That sound! I thought it was papa coming! He—No, dear, that was my last cigar being broken in my vest pocket!

"I've called my new song, 'Falling Dew'." "Then, my boy, it will never be popular. It is too strongly suggestive of household bills and commercial notes."

"The seaside resort you were speaking of is a pretty gay place, isn't it?" "I should say so! The only thing there that isn't dissipated is the fog."

"I see you have an actor employed on the farm?" "Yes, I put him on. He's a darn good actor, too. I thought he was working the first week he was here."

A little girl, hearing her mother speak of going into half mourning, said: "Why are you going into half mourning, mamma—are any of our relations half dead?"

Sophomore—What's the matter, old pal? You look sick. Senior—I am sick. Just gone through a blamed serious operation. Had my allowance cut!

ITEMS OF GENERAL INTEREST

BIG BEAR KILLED.

Charles W. McClure came into Vernon, Utah, the other day with the hide of a 700-pound black bear, which he killed after a terrific struggle on Diamond Mountain.

The bear had been caught by one toe in a trap. The pain infuriated the beast and he was dragging a huge anchor leg after him. McCune, looking for his prize, started on the trail. He was closely scrutinizing the ground when suddenly Bruin reared up on his haunches, less than ten feet away. He was much taller than the man.

McCune aimed his 30-30 for the heart, but the shot went high of the mark. It brought the bear down, however, but he sprang up ready for a fight. Another shot put him down for the second time and a third in the brain killed him. His hide is of the finest sleek, black fur and one of the largest seen in these mountains for years. The bounty was \$30.

GIVING HIMSELF A PRESENT

"An' I got a \$450 ring for my gal, and a set of furs for my old lady, and a bunch of stuff for my kid brother, and something for all the rest of the family." Tim Jordan completed the enumeration of his Christmas shopping excursions with a grin of satisfaction.

"Of course," he continued, "all that stuff let me in pretty deep. I had to mortgage my right eye to pay for some of those things and some of 'em won't be paid for for a good while. But I guess it is worth it."

"Fine, Tim," commented Ed Perry, who was working at the next bench. "You'll have a lot of enjoyment making all those gifts Christmas. But what are you going to give yourself?"

"Give myself? You're crazy. It's all I can do to keep the rest of the family from feeling neglected on Christmas without buying myself anything. That is a fine idea giving a Christmas present to yourself. I'd just as soon cheat myself playing solitaire."

"Think so?" Perry answered. "Well, there's one present you can give yourself that will do you more good than all the purple neckties your woman folks will pick out for you and all the blue shoes and red and yellow slippers you'll get Christmas morning. It'll do you more good than if anybody handed you a certified check for a thousand dollars."

"Nobody can give it to you but yourself, and it won't cost you anything either."

"All right," said Tim, "I'll bite. Mr. Bones, what is it I should make myself a Christmas present of that don't cost anything?"

"The savings habit," answered Ed seriously. "You want a couple of more lessons. A fine time to tell you to get the savings habit when I've spent all I've got and I'll be here for weeks to come."

"That's just the time to get the habit," Ed continued. "You like to give things to the people you are fond of, don't you? Well, you had to go in debt to do it. Wouldn't it be fine now if you should kick off and these very people would have to pay your debts—pay for their own presents?"

"That kind of giving isn't unselfishness—it's foolishness. Giving the savings habit to yourself isn't stinginess—it's intelligent unselfishness. You give yourself the savings habit and you won't have to go in debt to do what you want for the people you care for."

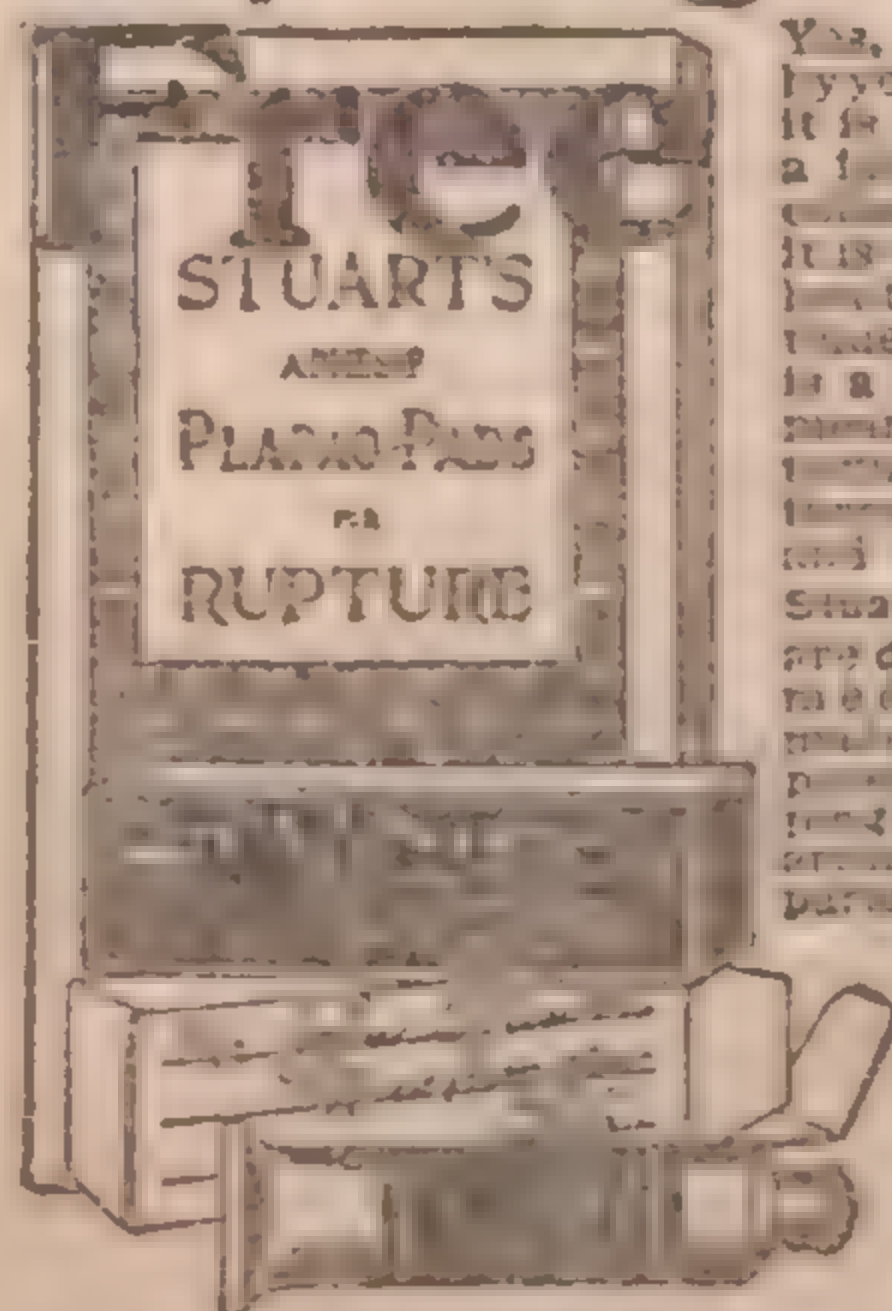
"Well, there's a lot in what you say," said Tim, rubbing his head reflectively. "But how come you to say it don't cost anything?"

"It don't cost you anything because if you take the first dollars out of each pay envelope and put them into war savings stamps or Treasury savings certificates or Liberty Bonds or some sound security that is safe and pays good interest, you never miss the money. But when you want to do something for yourself or some one else, you have something to do it with."

"I don't begrudge a cent I ever spent on the people I'm fond of," argued Tim defensively.

"Of course you don't," agreed Ed. "But you don't think much of the bird who's all filled with generous thoughts of sharing every thing he's got with you when he hasn't anything. You give yourself the savings habit and you'll have something to be generous with. The best way to get it is to buy Government savings securities regularly. 'Try it and wish yourself a Merry Christmas.'"

Stop Using a Truss



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KILLED MANY SEA LIONS

William M. Hunter, known in Astoria, Ore., as "king" of sea lion hunters, recently collected \$880 bounty from the State for 352 sea lion scalps, paid at the rate of \$2.50 each. Bounty is paid on the sea lion because they are considered the Pacific Coast salmon's worst enemy. They gather off the mouth of the Columbia River to prey on fish bound upstream. Sea lion hunting is dangerous, Hunter says, and he tells of narrow escapes from angry bulls. Seals, he asserts, are not as awkward as they appear, but can travel fast. Recently one chased him over the rocks, but was killed by Hunter's companion before it reached him.

Hunter works from a small launch while at sea. Much of his hunting is done on rocky beaches where seals congregate. He learned his trade—as he terms it—as a mountaineer hunting bear and deer in the Cascade Mountains.

In addition to the Government bounty, Hunter is paid by salmon cannery men for destroying seals. Estimated on the 1919 pack, the rate of the cannery bounty would be about \$3,000 for every 1,000 sea lions killed.

PIG ON THE RAMPAGE

Expressing genuine peevishness at being crated and packed in an express car instead of being housed in a regulation stock car, a large hog was responsible for much excitement and more delay when it went on a rampage in the express car shortly after the train had left Garrettson, S. D.

Shattering its crate, the huge porker chased the expressman to cover. The train was stopped, and passengers and train crew together, after considerable effort, coaxed the curly tailed grunter back into its badly jammed crate.

The train was again started. Again longing for its less state-ly but more comfortable berth in the stock car, the porker was quiet for a short time only, and stop number two was made by the train, and the train crew and passengers summoned for the second time when the animal demolished the crate again. After the express matter in the car had been turned topsy turvy and the confusion made general, the restless swine was trapped into a more secure crate and forced to submit to imprisonment during the remainder of the trip.



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The "Lunchette," a combined home-made, store-made lunch box for the use of office workers who are joining in the "Carry-Your-Own-Lunch" fight against prevailing restaurant prices, has appeared. In a downtown store where office supplies are sold part of one window has been given over to the use of an enterprising organization which prepares and boxes 30-cent lunches.

In the midst of a display of fountain pens and notebooks, a neat, white-coated and capped maiden daily prepares the sandwiches which, with other eatables, go into a box and form a 30-cent "lunchette." Different lunches are prepared daily, but always they include two sandwiches, a cookie, pie or pastry and some fruit.

Here is the menu for the first day of one week: One chicken salad sandwich, one ham sandwich, one sugar cookie, one large chocolate éclair and one peach.

Judging by the steady rush of customers, a lot of office workers prefer to pay a small sum for a boxed luncheon rather than go to the trouble of bringing one from home.

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NOTE: "The Inner Mysteries of Rheumatism" referred to above by Pastor Reed lays bare facts about rheumatism and its associated disorders overlooked by doctors and scientists for centuries past. It is a work that should be in the hands of every man or woman who has the slightest symptoms of rheumatism, neuritis, lumbago or gout. Any one who sends name and address to H. P. Clearwater, 534 F Street, Hallowell, Maine will receive it by mail, postage paid absolutely free. Send now, lest you forget the address! If not a sufferer, cut out the explanation and hand it to some afflicted

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